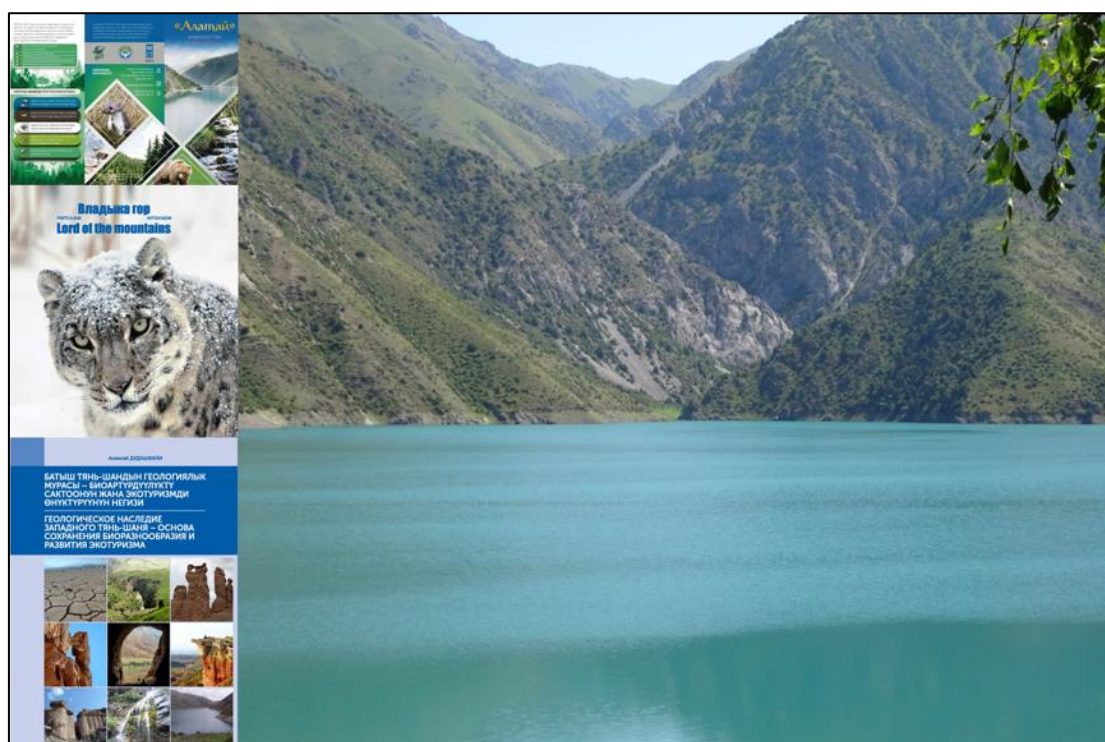




Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

***“Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods”***

***Kyrgyzstan***



## **Mid-Term Review FINAL Report**

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<b>GEF Agency:</b>	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
<b>Implementing Partner:</b>	State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF)
<b>Funding:</b>	GEF
<b>GEF Project ID:</b>	6958
<b>UNDP PIMS:</b>	5411
<b>UNDP Atlas Project ID:</b>	00101540
<b>Project Timeline:</b>	December 2016 – December 2021

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*Submitted by:*  
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*Submitted on:* December 6, 2019

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	II
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	IV
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
1. CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT .....	7
2. REVIEW FRAMEWORK .....	7
2.1. OBJECTIVES.....	7
2.2. SCOPE.....	8
2.3. METHODOLOGY.....	9
2.3.1. Overall Approach .....	9
2.3.2. Review Instruments .....	10
2.4. LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS .....	11
3. EVALUATION FINDINGS .....	11
3.1. PROJECT STRATEGY .....	11
3.1.1. Project Design .....	11
3.1.2. Results Framework / Log-frame .....	17
3.2. PROGRESS TOWARDS RESULTS .....	20
3.2.1. Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis.....	20
3.2.2. Remaining Barriers to Achieve the Project Objective .....	30
3.3. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT .....	31
3.3.1. Management Arrangements.....	31
3.3.2. Stakeholder Engagement.....	32
3.3.3. Work Planning.....	34
3.3.4. Finance and Co-finance.....	35
3.3.5. Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems.....	38
3.3.6. Reporting.....	43
3.3.7. Communications / Knowledge Management.....	43
3.4. SUSTAINABILITY .....	44
3.4.1. Financial risk to Sustainability.....	46
3.4.2. Socio-economic risk to Sustainability .....	46
3.4.3. Institutional framework and governance risk to Sustainability.....	47
3.4.4. Environmental risk to Sustainability .....	47
4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED .....	47
4.1. CONCLUSIONS .....	47
4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS .....	51
4.3. LESSONS LEARNT .....	53
ANNEX 1: PROJECT EXPECTED RESULTS AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES .....	54
ANNEX 2: MTR TERMS OF REFERENCE.....	62
ANNEX 3: UNEG CODE OF CONDUCT FOR REVIEWERS AND AGREEMENT FORM .....	69
ANNEX 4: REVIEW MATRIX .....	70
ANNEX 5: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED .....	77
ANNEX 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE .....	80
ANNEX 7: REVIEW MISSION AGENDA .....	82
ANNEX 8: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED .....	88
ANNEX 9: MTR RATING SCALES .....	93
ANNEX 10: AUDIT TRAIL.....	94
ANNEX 11: EVALUATION REPORT CLEARANCE FORM .....	95

## List of Tables

Table 1: Project Information Table .....	1
Table 2: MTR Ratings and Achievement Summary Table .....	6
Table 3: Steps Used to Conduct the Evaluation .....	10
Table 4: Project Logic Model .....	18
Table 5: List of Delivered Results .....	21
Table 6: Initial Stakeholders Involvement Plan .....	32
Table 7: Annual Work Plans versus Actual Expenditures (GEF Grant) .....	35
Table 8: UNDP-GEF Project Funds Disbursement Status (in USD) .....	36
Table 9: Co-financing Status .....	37
Table 10: List of Performance Indicators .....	39
Table 11: List of Risks and Mitigation Measures Identified at the Formulation Phase .....	44

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

APR	Annual Progress Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Civil Based Organization
CDR	Combined Delivery Report
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GSLEP	Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Program
Ha	Hectare
HCVF	Hight Conservation Value Forest
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JFM	Joint Forestry Management
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
LD	Land Degradation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA	Protected Area
PB	Project Board
PC	Project Coordinator
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
RBEC	Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS
SAEPF	State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound
SNP	State National Park
SPNA	Specially Protected Nature Areas
TOR	Terms of Reference
TT	Tracking Tool
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
WTS	Western Tian Shan
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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## DISCLAIMER

*This report is the work of an independent Reviewer and does not necessarily represent the views, or policies, or intentions of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and/or of the Government of Kyrgyzstan.*

## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the UNDP-supported-GEF-Financed-Government of Kyrgyzstan Project “*Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods*”. This MTR was performed by an Independent Evaluator, Mr. Jean-Joseph Bellamy on behalf of UNDP.

Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked country in the center of Eurasia. It acts as a natural crossroads between flora and fauna of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and China, which are different biogeographic regions. The Tian Shan and Alay ranges act as a bridge connecting fauna and flora of Himalayas and Hindu Kush across Pamir with biota of Siberia, and across Dzhungar Ala-Tau and Altay with biota of Mongolia. The Western Tian Shan is one of the world's 200 priority ecoregions and one of 34 global biodiversity hotspots. It has been designated as a natural World Heritage Site. Its fauna and flora are characterized by high diversity and concentration in a relatively small area.

However, many of the Western Tian Shan's species and unique ecosystems are threatened by poor forest and land management. The region is home to 54 Red List plant species, and 27 Red List species of fauna, including the snow leopard. The forest resources in the region are shrinking. They suffer from inadequate forest management and enforcement, and are degraded by intensive land use, such as overgrazing of forest pastures. The grassland areas of the Western Tian Shan are subject to extensive, uncontrolled agro-pastoral land use. Growing livestock numbers lead to extensive unregulated use of mountainous grasslands for grazing and causes high disturbance to wild ungulates such as argali and ibex, key snow leopard prey species. Today, over 60% of pastures in Western Tian are eroded and the quality of pastures has declined by four times compared to 1980s levels.

The long-term solution for biodiversity conservation and sustainable land and forest in the Western Tian Shan entails a comprehensive integrated landscape management approach, including the livelihood needs of local populations and protected areas as anchors of conservation within a productive semi-forested pastoral alpine landscape. This approach is particularly critical to ensure the conservation of wide-ranging apex predator mammals, such as snow leopards using large seasonal territories. Nevertheless, significant barriers were identified for Kyrgyzstan to implement this long-term solution; they include: (i) weak management of Key Biodiversity Areas; (ii) unsustainable management of land and forest in wider landscape; and (iii) low uptake of and capacity to implement international best practices for snow leopard conservation and management of its habitat.

As a response to these threats and barriers, the project has been implementing a landscape conservation and management approach, which includes the identification of key biodiversity areas, of buffer zones, corridors and the implementation of a sustainable forest and pasture management approach, including activities to conserve snow leopard. The project objective is “*to promote a landscape approach to protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan*”. It will be achieved through the delivery of three expected outcomes (and 13 outputs):

1. Conservation and sustainable management of Key Biodiversity Areas within landscape;
2. Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in Western Tian Shan are enhanced by regulating land and forest use in buffer zones and corridors and support to sustainable livelihoods;
3. Strengthened national capacities for snow leopard conservation, promoting Kyrgyz regional and global cooperation, and setting the scene for up-scaling.

**Table 1: Project Information Table**

<b>Project Title:</b>	Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods.		
<b>UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):</b>	5411	<b>PIF Approval Date:</b>	June 4, 2015
<b>GEF Project ID (PMIS #):</b>	6958	<b>CEO Endorsement Date:</b>	December 27, 2016
<b>Award ID:</b>	00097902	<b>Project Document (ProDoc) Signature Date (date project began):</b>	March 17, 2017
<b>Country:</b>	Kyrgyzstan	<b>Date project manager hired:</b>	October 1, 2017
<b>Region:</b>	CIS	<b>Inception Workshop date:</b>	December 7, 2017

<b>Focal Area:</b>	Biodiversity	<b>Midterm Review date:</b>	July-August 2019
<b>GEF-6 Strategic Programs:</b>	BD-1 pg. 2 BD-4 pg. 9 LD-3 pg 4 SFM-1, 2 & 3	<b>Planned closing date:</b>	December 31, 2021
<b>Trust Fund:</b>	GEF-6	<b>If revised, proposed closing date:</b>	
<b>Executing Agency:</b>	State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF)		
<b>Other Execution Partners:</b>			
<b>Project Financing</b>	at CEO endorsement (USD)	at Midterm Review (USD)	
<b>(1) GEF financing:</b>	3,988,575	3,988,575	
<b>(2) UNDP contribution:</b>	5,527,383	5,527,383	
<b>(3) Government:</b>	18,064,800	18,064,800	
<b>(4) Other Partners:</b>	927,000	927,000	
<b>(5) Total co-financing [2+3+4]:</b>	24,519,183	24,519,183	
<b>Project Total Cost [1+5]:</b>	28,507,758	28,507,758	

This mid-term review report documents the achievements of the project and includes four chapters. Chapter 1 presents the context and an overview of the project, chapter 2 briefly describes the objective, scope, methodology, evaluation users and limitations of the evaluation; chapter 3 presents the findings of the evaluation; chapter 4 presents the main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned and relevant annexes are found at the back end of the report.

### ***Key Findings***

A summary of the main conclusions of this MTR is presented below.

### ***Project Strategy***

**a) The project is relevant for Kyrgyzstan:** The WTS project is well aligned with national strategies and programmes as well as the UNDP and GEF-6 focal areas strategies. It is a direct response to national priorities by: (i) preventing the further fragmentation of key biodiversity landscapes and degradation of forest and land resources in Kyrgyzstan that provide critical ecosystem services; (ii) ensuring habitat connectivity across the Western Tian Shan landscape for key species, including snow leopard and prey; (iii) improving the conservation status, and sustainability of pasture and forest use in mountain ecosystems; (iv) implementing snow leopard and prey monitoring and conservation measures, and reduction of direct threats, in the Western Tian Shan and in other Kyrgyzstan priority snow leopard conservation landscapes.

**b) An ambitious project with a broad scope and many activities to be implemented:** It is an ambitious project with the introduction of several new biodiversity conservation and management concepts for Kyrgyzstan, including the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF), Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and SFM certification, Sustainable Land Management (SLM), Joint Forest Management (JFM), new management tools for State National Parks, Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), “green” micro-grant scheme, and National Strategy on Snow Leopard Conservation. These new concepts are all valid concepts to be introduced in Kyrgyzstan. However, the implementation of these concepts implies the need to develop numerous capacities including institutional and individual capacities, and the need to have an adequate enabling environment (policy and legislative frameworks), resulting in an extended list of activities to be implemented.

### ***Progress Towards Results***

**c) The progress made by the project to date is satisfactory:** The implementation adheres to the project strategy detailed in the project document. Overall, the project has made good progress so far and it has 30 more months of implementation. Outcome 1 & 3 are progressing well. Progress under outcome 2 is slower due mostly to the fact that the HCVF concept has not been officialized yet preventing forestry activities to be implemented and that the micro-grant scheme as not started yet. Progress highlights under each outcome include:



- Under Outcome 1 the project has introduced the METT methodology and a guide to conduct METT assessment, which was officialized by a SAEPF Order. METT scores have been established for all PAs in WTS. The project procured critical equipment to Rangers to better monitor and surveil fauna and flora in the two new SNPs as well as equipment to facilitate their fieldwork, including riding horses and camping equipment. The project has been introducing the HVCF concept in the forestry sector and a methodology to apply this concept to forests in Kyrgyzstan should be approved later in 2019. Finally, the project has also contributed to strengthen the patrolling and surveilling capacity of PAs in WTS.
- Under Outcome 2 some plantations took place to restore some forest resources. The project has supported the revision/improvement of the existing electronic pasture management system as well as the use of this revised System by herders/farmers. It has also contributed to the restoration of degraded pastures. The project has also been supporting the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation in local development planning in the Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts. Finally, a micro-grant scheme is being developed to provide small “green” grants to herders and farmers. A first tranche of USD 100k should be deployed in the coming year.
- Under Outcome 3 the project has so far procured uniforms for the Dog Service staff at the Manas (Bishkek) airport and it is in the process of procuring an open-air cage for 4 dogs for the service to improve the control of illegal wildlife trade at the airport. The project is also seeking to support the training of dogs to combat poaching. Regarding the conservation of Snow Leopard, the project has been supporting national stakeholders, including the GSLEP Secretariat, to participate in consultation meetings with Central Asian countries for the development of a Memorandum of Cooperation on the Conservation of the Snow Leopard and its habitat. The project also supports the development of a Snow Leopard Monitoring database and a monitoring methodology to monitor the Snow Leopard population, including the procurement of 50 camera traps. Finally, a series of information products were developed and used by the project in various fora to raise awareness about wildlife conservation, particularly Snow Leopard conservation.

**d) The progress made to develop the required capacities may not be enough to be sustained over the long term:** Despite the good progress made by the project in its first half, the broad scope of the project strategy raises two critical questions: how sustainable capacities developed with the support of the project will be? Is the project spreading its resources too thin due to too many intervention areas and too many activities to be implemented? The strategy of the project includes the introduction of several new management concepts to conserve biodiversity. They require a lot of capacity development activities for being mainstreamed in key organizations responsible for managing and conserving biodiversity. Activities implemented during the lifetime of the project may not be enough to ensure the sustainability of project achievements. These valid and critical questions need to be reviewed carefully in order to maximize the sustainability of project achievements. A focus on the capacities of individuals and strengthening organizational processes and systems is recommended for the remaining implementation period of the project.

### ***Project Implementation and Adaptive Management***

**e) The management arrangements are conducive for a good implementation of the project:** The project is implemented by a good technical team of professionals bringing together a broad range of skills and knowledge in protected areas, forestry and pasture management, biodiversity conservation, local livelihood, and capacity development areas. It is conducive for a good implementation of the project; resulting in good collaborations with relevant governmental and non-governmental entities as well as with local communities in the project areas.

**f) The partnerships developed by the project implementation team with stakeholders and beneficiaries as well as with other related donor fund projects is excellent:** The project enjoys excellent partnerships with relevant government entities at all levels (national, regional and local); including ARIS, Association of Pasture Committees as well as non-governmental organizations such as NABU, Irbis, GSLEP, UCA, and Snow Leopard Foundation/Trust. It also enjoys an excellent coordination approach with other related donor-funded projects. The project also joined the *Coordination and Consultative Council*, an entity led by SAEPF and bringing together donors, and national and international stakeholders implementing forest related projects. Good coordination mechanisms are in place to collaborate among Partners, including the exchange of best practices and lessons learned. The participative and collaborative approach used by the project implementation



team is conducive for this good engagement and will certainly be contributing to the sustainability of project achievements over the long term.

**g) The disbursements of the GEF grant is slower than the timeline (33% vs. 50%) and the full grant may not be expended by December 2021:** As of end of June 2019, total expenditures amount to about USD 1.322M representing about 33% of the GEF grant versus an elapsed time of 50% (30 months out of 60). It has a remaining budget from the GEF grant of USD 2,666,794 (67%) for the remaining period of implementation. When considering the timeline left for implementing the project (30 months), it is doubtful that the entire budget will be expended by December 2021. From an average monthly disbursement of USD 44,059 so far, the project would need to double its average monthly disbursement to USD 88,893 for the remaining implementation period. It would require a drastic change in managing the project with a significant increase of project activities and disbursements to reach this average.

**h) The co-financing amount committed at the outset need to be better monitored:** Co-financing commitments at the outset of the project totaled USD 24,519,183, which represented about 86% of the total amount of the financial resources committed in the project document (GEF grant + co-financing). So far, limited reporting has been made available on co-financing contributions. Yet, Partners have certainly contributed critical resources to the implementation of this project. These co-financing commitments need to be reviewed and requests made yearly to obtain co-financed estimates from Partners.

**i) The M&E plan to measure the performance of the project include a complex set of quantitative indicators and targets and do not provide a clear measure of how well capacities are developed:** The M&E function of the project is too focused on quantitative indicators. It is also a convoluted set of indicators with some redundancies, in some cases difficulties to understand what they aim to measure, and most of them too wordy. Nevertheless, they give a clear measure of things and are numerically comparable; however, quantitative indicators do not depict the status of something in more qualitative terms. They do not measure well how effective the project is in developing the capacity of stakeholders in changing the way they manage and conserve biodiversity. It resulted in an M&E framework that is too focused on surface areas to be covered by the project (number of ha) and on the number of participants involved in information/training events and not enough on the development of new knowledge and on increasing the skills and knowledge of stakeholders/beneficiaries who should be able to replicate and scale-up project achievements.

**j) Communication activities and knowledge management are excellent and provide a good visibility of the project at national, regional and local levels:** The project has produced excellent information products to raise awareness of stakeholders and beneficiaries and overall to emphasize the visibility of the project. The project has released numerous communication products through several channels, including YouTube videos, newsletters, magazines, social media, websites including those from partners to the project, TV channels, books, brochures, etc. The project set up a Facebook pages for both new SNPs: Alatai and Kan-Achuu. The list of communication products released by the project and reported in the last 2019 PIR includes over 270 pieces of communication! All these communication products have contributed to the dissemination of knowledge on biodiversity conservation, including Snow Leopard conservation throughout Kyrgyzstan.

### ***Sustainability***

**k) Project achievements should be sustained over the long-term:** The main risk to the sustainability of project achievements is a financial risk. The project has been supporting the establishment of two new SNPs, including the procurement of equipment to facilitate monitoring and surveilling fauna and flora within these new SNPs. This support accompanied by new methods, procedures and training has been optimal for the establishment of these new SNPs. However, once the project will end, financial resources will still be needed to maintain the equipment and at times to replace it, as well as the need to manage these two new SNPs. The government is committed to promote better approaches to biodiversity conservation. Conserving biodiversity is an important sector for Kyrgyzstan, including for the development of eco-tourism. It is expected that the government will continue to implement this priority and support these two SNPs with the necessary financial resources, including resources to scale-up project achievements to other parts of Kyrgyzstan.

### ***Recommendations***

Based on the findings of this mid-term review, the following recommendations are suggested.

**Recommendation 1:** To conduct a capacity assessment and allocate project resources to consolidate capacities during the remaining implementation period of the project. When considering the broad scope of the project with the implementation of several new management concepts to conserve biodiversity, it requires a lot of capacity development activities to mainstream them in key organizations. Activities implemented during the lifetime of the project may not be enough to ensure the sustainability of project achievements. A particular focus on developing capacities of individuals (skills and knowledge) and on strengthening organizational processes and systems is needed.

**Recommendation 2:** To conduct feasibility studies in the two SNPs to identify the potential for diversifying sources of income, including development of ecotourism and potential impact on local livelihoods. There are expectations that these 2 new SNPs will be able to diversify their sources of revenue and that these protected areas will also provide additional sources of income to local communities and increase their livelihoods. An analysis of potential sources of income, their feasibility and the possible economic impacts to increase livelihoods of local communities is needed.

**Recommendation 3:** To develop a vision and objectives for the two new State National Parks: Alatau and Kan-Achuu. The project has been supporting the establishment of a management system to manage these two parks. It has procured some critical equipment to better monitor and surveil fauna and flora. Management teams are in place and management systems for these parks are being developed. A common vision among stakeholders (SNPs staff, Rangers and local communities) developed collaboratively is needed.

**Recommendation 4:** To conduct a strategic review of the overall PA network in Kyrgyzstan; including its legislation, management arrangements and roles and responsibilities. The network of PAs still suffers from underfunding and suboptimal management, including the fact that most PAs have no legally backed buffer zones and no corridors for the protection of some species such as the Snow Leopard and high conservation value forests are not protected. Within the framework of the current NBSAP covering the period till 2030, a strategic review of the PA network in Kyrgyzstan is needed.

**Recommendation 5:** To increase the participation of key stakeholders in the procurement of project goods and services. Considering that the project is implemented under the DIM modality – i.e. UNDP assumes the overall management responsibility and accountability for the implementation of the project – the procurement process is still viewed as slow by stakeholders and they would like to see a more transparent/participative process in procuring project goods and services.

**Recommendation 6:** To monitor the financial status of the project and request a no-cost time extension of the project if the GEF grant will not be expended by December 2021. As of end of June 2019, total expenditures amount to about USD 1.322M representing about 33% of the GEF grant versus an elapsed time of 50% (30 months out of 60). It is doubtful that the entire budget will be expended by December 2021. The project would need to double its average monthly disbursement to USD 88,893 for the remaining implementation period.

**Recommendation 7:** To review co-financing commitments and request yearly estimates from Partners of the project. Co-financing commitments at the outset of the project totaled USD 24,519,183, which represented about 86% of the total amount of the financial resources committed in the project document (GEF grant + co-financing). So far, limited reporting has been made available on co-financing contributions. Yet, Partners have certainly contributed critical resources to the implementation of this project.

**Recommendation 8:** To add and monitor a political risk to the project risk log. The current risk log covers most aspects of the project where issues can arise. However, one additional risk that may arise is a change in political support for promoting new landscape approaches to biodiversity conservation and for integrating these new approaches within the environmental sector.

### ***Lessons Learned***

Several lessons learned are presented below:

- A project that is a response to clear national needs and priorities is often highly relevant for beneficiaries and its chance of being implemented effectively are maximized.
- There is a high value of having a project managed by a competent and dedicated professional project team, with adequate human and financial resources to achieve the planned outputs.
- A good design leads to a good implementation, which in turn leads to good project results. There is more chance for a project well designed to be a success.
- Donor coordination of related projects done at projects level can provide a very effective way to develop synergies among actors and scaling up projects results.
- When the project covers a large geographic area, a strong communications program is vital to project success; including its visibility.
- Involving stakeholders in project design and ensuring their participation in the implementation of project activities enable conflict minimization and improve ownership of solutions.
- Implementation through government entities as custodians of project achievements is conducive to good long-term sustainability.

### ***MTR Ratings and Achievement Summary Table***

Below is the rating table as requested in the TORs. It includes the required performance criteria rated as per the rating scales presented in Annex 9 of this report. Supportive information is also provided throughout this report in the respective sections.

**Table 2: MTR Ratings and Achievement Summary Table**

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
<b>Project Strategy</b>	N/A	
<b>Progress Towards Results</b>		
Objective Achievement:	<b>S</b>	The objective is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
Outcome 1 Achievement:	<b>S</b>	The outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
Outcome 2 Achievement:	<b>S</b>	The outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
Outcome 3 Achievement:	<b>S</b>	The outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management</b>	<b>S</b>	Implementation of most of the seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>L</b>	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project's closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future

## 1. CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT<sup>1</sup>

1. Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked country in the center of Eurasia. It acts as a natural crossroads between flora and fauna of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and China, which are different biogeographic regions. The Tian Shan and Alay ranges act as a bridge connecting fauna and flora of Himalayas and Hindu Kush across Pamir with biota of Siberia, and across Dzhungar Ala-Tau and Altay with biota of Mongolia. The Western Tian Shan is one of the world's 200 priority ecoregions and one of 34 global biodiversity hotspots. It has been designated as a natural World Heritage Site. Its fauna and flora are characterized by high diversity and concentration in a relatively small area. In terms of flora, higher plants number more than 2,500 species, and endemism of the flora is 12%; the number of vertebrates is well over 400 species.

2. However, many of the Western Tian Shan's species and unique ecosystems are threatened by poor forest and land management. The region is home to 54 Red List plant species, and 27 Red List species of fauna, including the snow leopard. The forest resources in the region are shrinking. They suffer from inadequate forest management and enforcement, and are degraded by intensive land use, such as overgrazing of forest pastures. The rate of natural regeneration and reforestation is unable to keep pace with the rate of forest degradation. The grassland areas of the Western Tian Shan are subject to extensive, uncontrolled agro-pastoral land use. Growing livestock numbers lead to extensive unregulated use of mountainous grasslands for grazing and causes high disturbance to wild ungulates such as argali and ibex, key snow leopard prey species. The rangelands of Western Tian Shan are susceptible to overgrazing, droughts, and inadequate natural regeneration in the face of these pressures. Today, over 60% of pastures in Western Tian are eroded and the quality of pastures has declined by four times compared to 1980s levels.

3. As a response to these threats and in order to ensure biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of forest and land resources, the project has been implementing a landscape conservation and management approach, which includes the identification of key biodiversity areas, of buffer zones, corridors and the implementation of a sustainable forest and pasture management approach, including activities to conserve snow leopard. The project objective is *"to promote a landscape approach to protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan"*. It will be achieved through the delivery of three expected outcomes and 13 outputs (see more detailed about the project strategy in Annex 1):

- **Outcome 1:** Conservation and sustainable management of Key Biodiversity Areas within landscape;
- **Outcome 2:** Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in Western Tian Shan are enhanced by regulating land and forest use in buffer zones and corridors and support to sustainable livelihoods;
- **Outcome 3:** Strengthened national capacities for snow leopard conservation, promoting Kyrgyz regional and global cooperation, and setting the scene for up-scaling.

4. This is a project supported by UNDP, the GEF, and the Government of Kyrgyzstan. It is funded by a grant from the GEF of USD 3,988,575 and a total co-financing of USD 24,512,918; including a cash contribution from UNDP (TRAC) of USD 100,000, parallel funding of 5,427,383 from UNDP, a contribution from the government of USD 18,064,800 (national government and local governments of Toktogul and Toguz-Toro), and USD 927,000 from other bilateral Partners and NGOs. The total financing of the project is USD 28,507,758. The project started in January 2017 and its duration is 5 years to be completed by December 2021. It is implemented under the "Direct Implementation Modality (DIM)". The implementing partner is the State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF) of Kyrgyzstan.

## 2. REVIEW FRAMEWORK

5. This mid-term review - a requirement of UNDP and GEF procedures - has been initiated by UNDP Kyrgyzstan the Commissioning Unit and the GEF Implementing Agency for this project. This review provides an in-depth assessment of project achievements and progress towards its objectives and outcomes.

### 2.1. Objectives

<sup>1</sup> Information in this section has been summarized from the project document.

6. The objective of the MTR was to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and Project Inception Report, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying possible changes to be made in order to keep/set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR also reviewed the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

## **2.2. Scope**

7. As indicated in the TORs for this MTR (*see Annex 2*), the scope of this review covered four categories of project progress, in accordance with the “*Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*”. A summary of the scope of this MTR is presented below:

### **A. Project Strategy:**

#### ***Project Design***

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions;
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results;
- Review how the project addresses country priorities.
- Review country ownership;
- Review decision-making processes;
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design;

#### ***Results Framework/Log-frame:***

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's log-frame indicators and targets;
- Review the project's objectives and outcomes or components and how feasible they can be reached within the project's time frame;
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis;
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively.

### **B. Progress Towards Results**

#### ***Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:***

- Review the log-frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix presented in the TORs and following the *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*;
- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the MTR;
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project;
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

### **C. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**

#### ***Management Arrangements:***

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document;
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement;
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.

#### ***Work Planning:***

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation;
- Review how Results-Based Management is being implemented;
- Examine the use of the project's results framework/ log-frame as a management tool.

#### ***Finance and co-finance:***

- Consider the financial management of the project, including cost-effectiveness;
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

***Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:***

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used;
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget;
- Review the project pilots and M&E systems in place to measure their performance.

***Stakeholder Engagement:***

- Review project partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders;
- Review stakeholder participation and country-driven project implementation processes;
- Review public awareness.

***Reporting:***

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
- Assess the project progress reporting function and how well it fulfils GEF reporting requirements;
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

***Communications:***

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders;
- Review external project communication;

**D. Sustainability**

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date;
- Assess risks to sustainability in term of financial risks, socio-economic risks, institutional framework and governance risks, and environmental risks.

**2.3. Methodology**

8. The methodology that was used to conduct this mid-term review complies with international criteria and professional norms and standards; including the norms and standards adopted by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG).

**2.3.1. Overall Approach**

9. The review was conducted in accordance with the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP “*Guidance for Conducting Mid-Term Reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-Financed Projects*”<sup>2</sup>, and the UNEG Standards and Norms for Evaluation in the UN System. The review was undertaken in-line with GEF principles which are: *independence, impartiality, transparency, disclosure, ethical, partnership, competencies/capacities, credibility and utility*. The process promoted accountability for the achievement of project objectives and promoted learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the project’s partners and beyond.

10. The Evaluator developed review tools in accordance with UNDP and GEF policies and guidelines to

<sup>2</sup> UNDP Evaluation Office, 2012, *Project-Level Evaluation – Guidance for Conducting Mid-Term Review of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*.

ensure an effective project review. The review was conducted, and findings are structured around the GEF five major evaluation criteria; which are also the five internationally accepted evaluation criteria set out by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). There are:

- *Relevance* relates to an overall assessment of whether the project is in keeping with donors and partner policies, with national and local needs and priorities as well as with its design.
- *Effectiveness* is a measure of the extent to which formally agreed expected project results (outcomes) have been achieved, or can be expected to be achieved.
- *Efficiency* is a measure of the productivity of the project intervention process, i.e. to what degree the outcomes achieved derive from efficient use of financial, human and material resources. In principle, it means comparing outcomes and outputs against inputs.
- *Impacts* are the long-term results of the project and include both positive and negative consequences, whether these are foreseen and expected, or not.
- *Sustainability* is an indication of whether the outcomes (end of project results) and the positive impacts (long term results) are likely to continue after the project ends.

11. In addition to the UNDP and GEF guidance for reviewing projects, the Evaluator applied to this mandate his knowledge of review methodologies and approaches and his expertise in biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihood, land and forest management and more generally in environmental management issues. He also applied several methodological principles such as (i) *Validity of information*: multiple measures and sources were sought out to ensure that the results are accurate and valid; (ii) *Integrity*: Any issue with respect to conflict of interest, lack of professional conduct or misrepresentation were immediately referred to the client if needed; and (iii) *Respect and anonymity*: All participants had the right to provide information in confidence.

12. The evaluation was conducted following a set of steps presented in the table below:

**Table 3: Steps Used to Conduct the Evaluation**

<b>I. Review Documents and Prepare Mission</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start-up teleconference/finalize assignment work plan</li> <li>Collect and review project documents</li> <li>Draft and submit <b>Inception Report</b></li> <li>Prepare mission: agenda and logistic</li> </ul>	<b>III. Analyze Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-depth analysis and interpretation of data collected</li> <li>Follow-up interviews (where necessary)</li> <li>Draft and submit <b>draft review report</b></li> </ul>
<b>II. Mission / Collect Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fact-findings mission to Kyrgyzstan for the Evaluator</li> <li>Interview key Stakeholders and conduct field visits</li> <li>Further collect project related documents</li> <li>Mission debriefings / <b>Presentation of key findings</b></li> </ul>	<b>IV. Finalize Review Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulate draft report to UNDP-GEF and relevant stakeholders</li> <li>Integrate comments and submit <b>final Review Report</b></li> </ul>

13. Finally, the Evaluator signed and applied the “*Code of Conduct*” for Review Consultants (*see Annex 3*). The Evaluator conducted review activities, which were *independent, impartial* and *rigorous*. This MTR clearly contributed to learning and accountability and the Evaluator has personal and professional integrity and was guided by propriety in the conduct of his business.

### **2.3.2. Review Instruments**

14. The review provides evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. Findings were triangulated through the concept of “*multiple lines of evidence*” using several review tools and gathering information from different types of stakeholders and different levels of management. The following review instruments were used to conduct this review:

**Review Matrix:** A review matrix was developed based on the review scope presented in the TOR, the project log-frame and the review of key project documents (*see Annex 4*). This matrix is structured along the five evaluation criteria and includes all review questions; including the scope presented in the guidance. The matrix provided overall directions for the review and was used as a basis for interviewing people and reviewing project documents.



**Documentation Review:** The Evaluator conducted a documentation review in Canada and in Kyrgyzstan (*see Annex 5*). In addition to being a main source of information, documents were also used to prepare the fact-findings mission in Kyrgyzstan. A list of documents was identified during the start-up phase and further searches were done through the web and contacts. The list of documents was completed during the fact-findings mission.

**Interview Guide:** Based on the review matrix, an interview guide was developed (*see Annex 6*) to solicit information from stakeholders. As part of the participatory approach, the Evaluator ensured that all parties viewed this tool as balanced, unbiased, and structured.

**Mission Agenda:** An agenda for the fact-findings mission of the Evaluator in Kyrgyzstan was developed during the preparatory phase (*see Annex 7*). The list of Stakeholders to be interviewed was reviewed, ensuring it represents all project Stakeholders. Then, interviews were planned in advance of the mission with the objective to have a well-organized and planned mission to ensure a broad scan of Stakeholders' views during the limited time allocated to the fact-findings mission.

**Interviews:** Stakeholders were interviewed (*see Annex 8*). The semi-structured interviews were conducted using the interview guide adapted for each interview. All interviews were conducted in person with some follow up using emails when needed. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the interviewees and the findings were incorporated in the final report.

**Field Visits:** As per the TORs, visits to project sites were conducted during the mission of the Evaluator in Kyrgyzstan; including project sites in the districts of Toktogul and Toguz-Toro. It ensured that the Evaluator had direct primary sources of information from the field and project end-users (beneficiaries). It gave opportunities to the Evaluator to observe project achievements and obtain views from stakeholders and beneficiaries at the regional and local levels.

**Achievement Rating:** The Evaluator rated achievements according to the guidance provided in the TORs. It included a six-point rating scale to measure progress towards results, project implementation and adaptive management and a four-point rating scale for sustainability (*see Annex 9*).

## **2.4. Limitations and Constraints**

15. The approach for this mid-term review was based on a planned level of effort of 28 days. It comprised a 9-day mission to Kyrgyzstan to interview key stakeholders, collect evaluative evidence; including visits to project sites in the districts of Toktogul and Toguz-Toro where the project support activities. Within the context of these resources, the Independent Evaluator was able to conduct a detailed assessment of actual results against expected results and successfully ascertains whether the project will meet its main objective - as laid down in the project document - and whether the project initiatives are, or are likely to be, sustainable after completion of the project. The Evaluator also made recommendations for any necessary corrections and adjustments to the overall project work plan and timetable and also for reinforcing the long-term sustainability of project achievements.

## **3. EVALUATION FINDINGS**

16. This section presents the findings of this MTR adhering to the basic structure proposed in the TOR and as reflected in the UNDP project review guidance.

### **3.1. Project Strategy**

17. This section discusses the assessment of the project strategy – including its relevance - and its overall design in the context of Kyrgyzstan.

#### **3.1.1. Project Design**

18. As presented in Section 1 above, the Western Tian Shan is part of the Tian Shan and Alay ranges, acting as a bridge connecting fauna and flora of Himalayas and Hindu Kush across Pamir with biota of Siberia, and

across Dzhungar Ala-Tau and Altay with biota of Mongolia. Its fauna and flora are characterized by high diversity and concentration in a relatively small area. There are about 300 species of fungi, several hundred species of algae, 100+ species of lichens and mosses and more than 2,500 species of higher plants, covering 673 geneses and 109 families. Endemism of the flora is 12%. Vertebrate fauna in the Western Tian Shan is represented by 61 species of mammals, 316 species of birds, 17 reptiles, 3 amphibians, and 31 species of fish, all with a high level of endemism. The region is home to 54 Red List higher plant species, and 27 Red List species of fauna, including the snow leopard. The rich diversity of plant and animal wealth is attributed to the high mountainous systems of Tian Shan and Pamir-Alay that reach up to 7,000m above sea level and accumulate moisture from the upper reaches of the atmosphere. High mountains are islands of biological diversity among monotonous plains. Being part of the mountains of Central Asia biodiversity hotspot, the Western Tian Shan is listed as one of the WWF Global 200 priority ecoregions for global conservation and one of the Conservation International's 34 global biodiversity hotspots. In July 2016, the Western Tian Shan was designated as a Natural World Heritage site at the 40<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Istanbul.

19. In order to provide long-term conservation of biological and landscape diversity of national, regional, and global importance, Kyrgyzstan has developed Specially Protected Nature Areas (SPNAs). The Law on SPNAs (2011) brought a radical redefinition of protected areas in conformity with IUCN recommended Protected Area (PA) categories and management priorities. It provides the legal basis for planning and management of the SPNA network, including the categorization of SPNAs in seven types of PA according to their respective management objectives. The network of PAs includes 89 PAs under the direct and indirect responsibility of the State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF). They cover an estimated 7.6% of the country; a good increase from 3.9% at the independence in 1991.

20. However, due to poor forest and land management, many of the Western Tian Shan's species and unique ecosystems are threatened. The forest resources in the region are shrinking. The grassland areas are subject to extensive, uncontrolled agro-pastoral land use. A series of threats, root cause and impacts have been identified during the design stage of this project; they include:

- *Pasture Degradation from Poor Grazing Management*: The grassland pastures of Western Tian Shan are subject to intensive agro-pastoral land use, with limited effective control and management currently in place. The main cause of degradation of grassland mountain ecosystems has been static livestock management, and unregulated and increasing livestock populations resulting in overgrazing and degradation of sensitive pasture ecosystems. This in turn has been leading to reduced populations of wild ungulates (e.g. argali and ibex) and small mammals (e.g. hares, ground squirrels, and marmots) that are key prey species of snow leopard and birds of prey, leading to population declines.
- *Human-Wildlife Conflicts*: Growth in the number of livestock leads to growth in conflicts between humans and wildlife. Overgrazing reduces suitable habitat areas for wild ungulates, thus potentially bringing them into increased contact with humans. The location of herders' camps close to high altitude pastures and their frequent poaching of wildlife significantly influences the behavior of animals, with consequences on habitat use and availability for wild ungulates. The avoidance and reduction of available habitat and time to graze in pastures affects the survival and reproduction of individual animals and the size and trends in population.
- *Overgrazing in Forests*: The problems of overgrazing highlighted above in relation to grassland ecosystems also affect vulnerable forest ecosystems, some of which are also used as "forest pastures" where domestic livestock are grazed. Unregulated livestock grazing presents a pressure on high conservation value juniper and fir forests, which are key components in the ecosystem mosaic comprising the globally significant biodiversity of the Western Tian Shan. Such forest stands are also important elements of habitat corridors for wild ungulates, and for snow leopard dispersal between alpine grasslands as a single snow leopard's home range is typically large enough to encompass several mountain ridges and the valleys in between.
- *Unsustainable Use of Forests*: Dependence on imported timber is high in Kyrgyzstan, since commercial forestry is prohibited, and relatively low volumes of wood are drawn mostly from maintenance/sanitary cutting. The high price of wood is putting illegal pressure on forests for fuelwood and local construction. Inadequate forest management practices, including the legally permission of harvesting over-mature trees in unprotected areas, contribute to the degradation of forests. Additionally, the rate of natural regeneration and reforestation is unable to keep pace with

the rate of forest degradation.

- *Legal and Illegal Hunting of Ungulates*: In the Western Tian Shan, the primary source of hunting pressure is from legal and illegal hunting of ungulates by local populations; considered as sport-hunting. Illegal hunting (mainly of ungulates, e.g. ibex) remains a significant issue and the enforcement capacity of the Department of Rational use of Natural Resources is limited to four hunting enforcement officers for all of the Toktogul district, and only two hunting enforcement officers for the Toguz-Toro district – equating to one enforcement officer per almost 200,000 ha. In the meantime, the number of reported cases of poaching of snow leopard is not high in Kyrgyzstan but is still an issue of concern. There was one identified incidence in January 2016.

21. The long-term solution for biodiversity conservation and sustainable land and forest in the Western Tian Shan entails a comprehensive integrated landscape management approach, including the livelihood needs of local populations and protected areas as anchors of conservation within a productive semi-forested pastoral alpine landscape. This approach is particularly critical to ensure the conservation of wide-ranging apex predator mammals, such as snow leopards using large seasonal territories. The implementation of this solution necessitates three key elements: a) Effective management of existing PAs and other key biodiversity areas; b) A high degree of integration of these protected areas with buffer zones, wildlife corridors and other areas of the broader landscape; and c) Adoption of international good practices for conservation of key components of biodiversity, such as the snow leopard. Nevertheless, significant barriers were identified for Kyrgyzstan to implement this long-term solution; they include:

- *Weak management of Key Biodiversity Areas*: The system does not provide adequate coverage for the spatial range of threatened species, most notably the snow leopard and prey. The protected area coverage of the snow leopard range in Western Tian Shan is less than 50%. The protected area system suffers from underfunding, and suboptimal management. Most PAs have no legally backed buffer zones and no corridors that are needed for effective conservation of such species as snow leopard.
- *Unsustainable management of land and forest in wider landscape*: Current forest and land-use plans do not take into account the ecological requirements of wildlife, including rare and threatened species such as snow leopard. Corridors providing for wildlife passage to key habitats outside the protected area are not identified or designated, and there is no legal mechanism for identifying or managing such corridors.
- *Low uptake of and capacity to implement international best practices for snow leopard conservation and management of its habitat*: Despite signing the Snow Leopard Declaration in Bishkek in October 2013 and the set-up of a working secretariat of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Program (GSLEP), at the time of the design of this project, the Kyrgyz government had not adopted yet international best practices for conservation of snow leopards, including the necessary monitoring, and law enforcement capacity and coordination to effectively control illegal wildlife trade across its borders.

22. As a response to these threats and barriers the project has been implementing a landscape conservation and management approach, which includes the identification of key biodiversity areas (KBAs), of buffer zones and corridors, the implementation of a sustainable forest and pasture management approach, and activities to conserve snow leopards, including supporting the full participation of Kyrgyzstan stakeholders in the global snow leopard coordination support mechanism. The project objective is "to promote a landscape approach to protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan". The project is divided into three components: 1) Conservation and sustainable management of Key Biodiversity Areas within landscape; 2) Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in Western Tian Shan are enhanced by regulating land and forest use in buffer zones and corridors and support to sustainable livelihoods; and 3) Strengthened national capacities for snow leopard conservation, promoting Kyrgyz regional and global cooperation, and setting the scene for up-scaling (*see more detailed about the project strategy in Annex 1*).

23. Within this context, the project is fully relevant for Kyrgyzstan, supporting the government to strengthen its capacity to implement a landscape conservation and management approach. The project is also well aligned with several national strategies, programmes and priorities:

### ***Development Program of the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2018-2022***

24. Under this program, the government of Kyrgyzstan committed to introduce the concept of “green economy” at all level of government operations. The strategy is to introduce the “green growth” principles in the structure of the economy at all stages (planning, decision-making, implementation and monitoring) and transit the national development toward a minimal impact on the natural environment. An emphasis of this program is on improving environmental data management, which consequently should improve the formulation and implementation of development plans, including better decision-making. This program also emphasizes the need to strengthen environmental assessment of projects by making the environmental impact assessment process permanent. Finally, much related to the project, this development program states the need to conserve and restore gradually natural ecosystems, including conserving and increasing the area of forest ecosystems and expanding/strengthening the network of SPNAs.

### ***National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)***

25. The first NBSAP published by the Kyrgyz government was in November 1998 for the period 1999-2004. It was developed with the support of the GEF and the technical support of the NGO Conservation International. It included a good review of biodiversity in Kyrgyzstan and the threats and barriers to improve the conservation of biodiversity. Some key findings included:

- A high density of both species and ecosystems. Many of the species and habitats concerned are of clear economic value to the people of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Many of the species and habitats, including many of economic and functional importance, have shown dramatic declines over recent years. Forest cover has been reduced by more than 50%, while areas of pasture have been severely degraded;
- Existing structures to manage and conserve biodiversity are under financed and as a consequence, the enforcement of existing legislation is limited;
- Biodiversity conservation is intrinsically bound to social and economic development. Investment in strengthening the protection of natural resources will support sustainable use of resources for future generations and will provide important means to improve livelihoods of communities.

26. According to the “6<sup>th</sup> National Report for the Convention on Biological Diversity” from Kyrgyzstan, the government Decree no. 131 of March 17, 2014 adopted the revised priorities and the action plan for biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan for the period 2014-2020 (NBSAP 2014-2020). This plan included 4 strategic goals, 13 objectives, and 77 activities in line with the country’s needs and priorities. However, the adoption of the SDGs and the insufficient reflection of the Aichi targets in this NBSAP, the SAEPPF, the responsible authority for biodiversity conservation decided to revise this Action Plan taking into account the new national strategic framework, the national commitments to implement the SDGs, the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol, the Snow Leopard Conservation Strategy and Action Plan for 2013-2023 and the Ramsar Wetlands Conservation Action Plan until 2023. It resulted in a set of biodiversity conservation priorities for the period 2019-2023, which was approved by government Order no. 45 of February 27, 2015. The action plan includes the objective to increase the protected areas in Kyrgyzstan from 7.4% of the country to 10% as well as to increase the forest area from 4.3% to 5.6%. The project is much aligned with the NBSAP as well as the updated version. It provides additional resources to the government to implement parts of the Snow Leopard Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (objective #12) as well as resources to strengthen the conservation of Biodiversity in Western Tian Shan.

### ***Environmental Legislation***

27. Over the years, the government of Kyrgyzstan has developed a regulatory legal framework to protect and conserve biodiversity. It covers almost all aspects of the environmental protection and biodiversity conservation system. However, as stated in the “6<sup>th</sup> National Report for the Convention on Biological Diversity”, the legislation framework has shortcomings. They include in some cases the need to develop bylaws to provide implementation mechanisms of these laws. In other cases, the existing bylaws have a too narrow sectoral approach, which are limitations to effectively implement the arrangement prescribed in the respective Laws. Furthermore, some laws and regulations contain contradictions or duplication. Regarding the Laws and regulations related to PAs, they do not provide a clear process for organizing and protecting these PAs. According to this report, the creation of a full-fledged protected area network with proper zoning is not being sufficiently addressed in the existing Laws. Furthermore, it states that to solve this issue, it requires an effective planning and management approach, making changes to Laws and regulations, the development of management plans at the state level, and the development and introduction of programmes providing for

alternative sources of income for local communities. Finally, partnerships between state bodies, local state administrations and local self-government authorities need to be strengthened, including the need to clarify roles and responsibilities and decision-making.

28. Within this legislative context and the assessment stated in the “*6<sup>th</sup> National Report for the Convention on Biological Diversity*”, the project is very much aligned with the needs and priorities of Kyrgyzstan. It provides resources to strengthen the PA network in Kyrgyzstan, piloting new a new management approach in two recently created PAs (State Nature Parks of Alatau and Kan-Achuu), including investments in some needed equipment to enforce the protection of natural resources but also to monitor the health of these natural resources.

### ***Gender Considerations***

29. The Evaluator found that gender considerations were well included in the design of the project. There is a detailed section discussing gender considerations in the project document under the Part II Strategy. It states that the legislative framework in place in Kyrgyzstan provides a foundation for equal rights and protections for women and men and for women’s rights to land and property. The government resolution of June 27, 2012 No. 443 approved the Kyrgyz National Strategy for Gender Equality until 2020 and the National Action Plan for 2012-2014 for Achieving Gender Equality. This strategy was since amended in 2013 (No. 395), in 2015 (No. 786), in 2016 (No. 589), and in 2018 (No. 537). Furthermore, the law “On the Basics of the State Guarantees for Ensuring Gender Equality” prohibits explicit and implicit gender discrimination and does not support norms of common law, tradition and culture that discriminate against gender. It guarantees equal rights to ownership of property, provides for equal use rights to land, where rights are granted in this way, and provides equal protection of rights to land for men and women.

30. However, despite an adequate legislative framework, it was found that traditional strict stereotypes of men and women’s roles in society and in household remain. It is still much believed that men should play the role of breadwinner and household leader, while women should confine themselves to domestic and children care work within the home. Women in Kyrgyzstan experience rather limited access to economic opportunities. Women’s independent economic activity has decreased almost two times within the decades since the country’s independence. Women are highly represented in the informal labor market and in certain service and trade sectors, which are high risk and lack social guarantees. Women in Kyrgyzstan spend three times more than men on housework and this number is higher in rural areas.

31. During the design of the project, an inclusive gender approach for consulting communities were used, included focus group discussions with different social groups. It provided a better sense of inclusion at the community level. Based on these broad consultations, the project strategy was developed with a focus on improving women representation in all community-based bodies such as the pasture management committees. It stated that gender and women's empowerment, including issues such as their participation and role in community based natural resource management bodies and workload balance will be aligned with the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (currently for the period 2018-2022). Furthermore, the project was to address the inclusive social mobilization approach to enhance women's participation in consultation process, in accessing land, pasture and forest resources of rural communities, and in project activities supporting alternative livelihoods contributing directly to women's economic empowerment.

32. This same section on gender considerations provided detailed on how the project will address gender-related issues. It included:

- Facilitate employment, training and equipping of woman as targeted PAs staff, joint patrol trainers and community rangers, community mobilizing officers, and leskhoz forest enforcement staff;
- Encourage actively the equitable use of women labor and supervisors from local rural villages in identifying and designating wildlife corridors near the targeted PAs, planning and implementing pasture management plans and restoring degraded pastures; and planning and restoring high conservational value forests;
- Ensure that women-owned and/or managed businesses participate equitably in the procurement of project-funded equipment and infrastructure; including the provision of minor services and supplies from local women-led businesses;
- Ensure that the reach of project-funded education/awareness-raising programs, and skills training in

the targeted communes will include both male- and female-headed households from the targeted villages;

- Ensure that the interests of women and women-headed households are adequately represented on SNP Steering Committees, Pasture Committees and JFM Boards; and are actively involved in the planning of protected areas, pastures and forests in the project areas;
- Ensure that the reach of project-funded sustainable livelihood development support will equitably include both male- and female-headed households from the targeted villages, including access to: (i) micro-financing for sustainable livelihoods; and (ii) technical and financial support from project for more sustainable pasture management practices and agriculture;
- Commit dedicated financial and technical support to addressing the significant knowledge constraints in pasture users from women-headed households.

33. The project had targeted the involvement of at least 30% of women participation in all project activities and events, and direct benefits for women of at least 30% project micro-financing of sustainable livelihoods program.

34. During the implementation, the project follows the “*UNDP Kyrgyzstan Gender Equality Strategy, 2018-2022*” and as much as possible disaggregates its information by gender. The project reports annually on gender mainstreaming describing gender-specific activities that have been conducted by the project for the reported period.

### ***UNDP Strategy in Kyrgyzstan***

35. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the period 2012-2016<sup>3</sup>, was built on lessons learned from the previous UNDAF cycle. This cycle was developed through a consultative, comprehensive and dynamic strategic priority-setting process. It provided a framework for collaboration with government entities and was well aligned with the national agenda, which was focus on four strategic priority pillars: (1) strengthening of economic potential; (2) governance efficiency; (3) socially oriented development; and (4) environmental safety. This UNDAF resulted in focusing on 3 areas identified as pillars for priority national development challenges to be addressed by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT): (1) Peace and Cohesion, Effective Democratic Governance, and Human Rights; (2) Social Inclusion and Equity; and (3) Inclusive and Sustainable Job-Rich Growth for Poverty Reduction. Protecting the environment was to be addressed under Outcome 2 of the third pillar: *By end of 2016, sustainable management of energy, environment and natural resources practices is operationalized*. The focus of this assistance framework under this outcome was on integrating an ecosystem approach into national and local development, improve the effectiveness of irrigation for agriculture, increase the agriculture production, and increase the non-carbon energy sources.

36. The most recent UNDAF covering the period 2018-2022 was developed in close collaboration with the government, the civil society and other development partners. It also continues to use the “Delivering-as-one” approach<sup>4</sup>. This assistance framework contains four main priorities/outcomes, including the third priority: Environment, climate change, and disaster risk management with the following outcome: By 2022, communities are more resilient to climate and disaster risks and are engaged in sustainable and inclusive natural resource management and risk-informed development.

37. UNDP, as part of the UNCT, entered into an agreement with the Government of Kyrgyzstan in 1992 in a spirit of friendly co-operation. This agreement signed on September 14, 1992, defines the scope and conditions under which UNDP assist the government in carrying out its development. Within this context and the UNDAF, UNDP developed its Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) for the period 2012-2016 in collaboration with the government of Kyrgyzstan. It was recognized during the formulation of this programme that much remains to be done to support the government’s efforts in the area of environment. It was planned that the programme will continue to assist the Government of Kyrgyzstan to support its transition to low carbon emissions and climate-resilient development, including the support to off-grid energy and energy efficiency.

<sup>3</sup> The UNDAF 2012-2016 was extended by one year to 2017.

<sup>4</sup> At the request of the Government, The Kyrgyz Republic was one of 8 “*Delivering as One*” pilot countries that sought to capitalize on the strengths and comparative advantages of the different members of the UN family to increase the UN system’s impact through more coherent programmes, reduced transaction costs for governments, and lower business operating costs. The Delivering as One approach is guided by Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The 2012-2016 programme focused on seven areas including “*Environment and Sustainable Development*” to support the development of a low-emission and climate-resilient development strategy.

38. The project has been well aligned with this programme. It has been part of this programme, supporting the government of Kyrgyzstan to integrate an ecosystem approach into national and local development strategies. In particular, the project has been promoting a landscape approach to protect international important diversity, and land and forest resources. The project support has strengthened systemic, institutional and individual capacities for sustainable climate resilient natural resource management, focusing on biodiversity conservation and protection.

### **GEF Focal Area Strategy**

39. As described in the project document, the project was developed (and is funded) under the GEF-6 cycle. It has been consistent with the objectives of, as well as contributing to several outcomes and outputs of the GEF’s Biodiversity, Land Degradation and Sustainable Forest Management Focal Area Strategies for the GEF-6 period. In particular, the project is well aligned with the biodiversity objectives 1 (Improve sustainability of protected area systems), 2 (Reduce threats to globally significant biodiversity), and 4 (Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes and seascapes and production sectors). It is well aligned with the land degradation objective 3 (Integrated landscapes: reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape). Finally, the project is also well aligned with three sustainable forest management objectives: SFM-1: Maintained Forest Resources: Reduce the pressures on high conservation value forests by addressing the drivers of deforestation; SFM-2: Enhanced Forest Management: Maintain flows of forest ecosystem services and improve resilience to climate change through SFM; and SFM-3: Restored Forest Ecosystems: Reverse the loss of ecosystem services within degraded forest landscapes.

40. In conclusion, the WTS project is well aligned with national strategies and programmes as well as the UNDP and GEF-6 focal areas strategies. It is a direct response to national priorities by: (i) preventing the further fragmentation of key biodiversity landscapes and degradation of forest and land resources in Kyrgyzstan that provide critical ecosystem services; (ii) ensuring habitat connectivity across the Western Tian Shan landscape for key species, including snow leopard and prey; (iii) improving the conservation status, and sustainability of pasture and forest use in mountain ecosystems; (iv) implementing snow leopard and prey monitoring and conservation measures, and reduction of direct threats, in the Western Tian Shan and in other Kyrgyzstan priority snow leopard conservation landscapes. The project focuses on four strategic areas: biodiversity conservation in protected areas; ecological integrity of forests in WTS; sustainable pasturelands management in key biodiversity areas of WTS; and national scientific monitoring and law enforcement capacities for snow leopard conservation. The Evaluator also found that the project was designed through a good participative approach – including many consultations conducted during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase - and that a good gender perspective was integrated in the project design.

### **3.1.2. Results Framework / Log-frame**

41. The *Strategic Results Framework* identified during the design phase of this project presents a well-articulated set of expected results. No changes were made during the inception phase to the project strategy (expected results) that was presented in the *Strategic Results Framework* in the project document. The review of the objective and outcomes indicates a satisfactory and logical “chain of results” – **Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Objective**. Project resources have been used to implement planned activities to reach a set of expected outputs (13), which would contribute in achieving a set of expected outcomes (3), which together should contribute to achieve the overall objective of the project. This framework also includes - for each outcome - a set of indicators and targets to be achieved at the end of the project and that are used to monitor the performance of the project.

42. The aim of the project is to promote a landscape approach focusing not only on Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA), but also buffer zones, corridors and sustainable forest and pasture management in wider landscape. This approach was identified as key to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of forest and land resources, including the survival of snow leopard and its prey species, as well as the sustainable local community development. Responding to national priorities, the project has four characteristics: (i) preventing the further fragmentation of key biodiversity landscapes and degradation of forest and land resources in



Kyrgyzstan that provide critical ecosystem services; (ii) ensuring habitat connectivity across the Western Tian Shan landscape for key species, including snow leopard and prey; (iii) improving the conservation status, and sustainability of pasture and forest use in mountain ecosystems; and (iv) implementation of snow leopard and prey monitoring and conservation measures, and reduction of direct threats, in the Western Tian Shan and other Kyrgyzstan priority snow leopard conservation landscapes.

43. As reviewed in the previous section the *Strategic Results Framework* indicates that this project is well aligned with national priorities and its logic is appropriate to address clear national needs/priorities. The logic model of the project presented in the *Strategic Results Framework* is summarized in table 4 below. It includes one objective, three outcomes and 13 outputs. For each expected outcome, indicators and targets to be achieved at the end of the project were identified.

**Table 4: Project Logic Model**

Expected Results	Indicators/Targets at End of Project
<p><b>Project Objective:</b> To promote a landscape approach to protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Population trend is at least stable over a rolling five-year period. Number of individuals and annual rate of change to be achieved by the end of the project</li> <li>2. Index of area and forest quality of globally significant flora in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts:</li> <li>3. 0 ha of area of degraded pastureland in four target A/As in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts</li> <li>4. Area of Jalal-Abad province for which improved biodiversity, forest, and land management measures will be directly influenced by project results: 34,382 ha in SFM; 4,886 ha in restored degraded forests; 147,268 ha in SLM; 87,322 in new protected areas</li> <li>5. Area of Jalal-Abad province for which improved biodiversity, forest, and land management measures will be indirectly influenced by project results for a total area of 944,317 ha</li> <li>6. Population of Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts that have derived indirect livelihood benefits from project results</li> </ol>
<p><b>Outcome 1 - Conservation and sustainable management of Key Biodiversity Areas within landscape</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Output 1.1:</b> Expanded operational SPNA network in the Western Tian Shan region through support to operationalize the two new State Nature Parks of Alatau and Kan-Achuu</li> <li>• <b>Output 1.2:</b> Upgraded status of HCVF, and sustainable forest management involving local communities</li> <li>• <b>Output 1.3:</b> Enhanced management and conservation capacities of Western Tian Shan PAs in Jalal-Abad Province, and strengthened HCVF management</li> <li>• <b>Output 1.4:</b> Strengthened participatory patrolling, enforcement and surveillance systems of new and existing PAs through the Local PA Management Board and joint patrol groups to enforce anti-poaching</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Management effectiveness of key alpine protected areas in Jalal-Abad province covering 286,099 ha (METT score)</li> <li>8. HCVF management approach has legal basis, and relevant regulations are produced</li> <li>9. Existence of HCVF management measures in FMPs and level of implementation in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts</li> <li>10. 1,000 hectares patrolled per week in 2021</li> </ol>
<p><b>Outcome 2 – Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in Western Tian Shan are enhanced by regulating land and forest use in buffer zones and corridors and support to sustainable livelihoods.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Output 2.1:</b> Identified and designated buffer zones for new SPNAs and wildlife corridors between relevant SPNAs</li> <li>• <b>Output 2.2:</b> Territorial development plans of Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts and communities aligned with biodiversity conservation, SFM and SLM objectives</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. &gt;40,000 ha of sustainably managed forest in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts</li> <li>12. 4,886 ha of forest resources restored in the landscape (500 ha reforestation/ afforestation, 4,500 ha supported for natural regeneration)</li> <li>13. Lifetime indirect GHG emissions avoided of 2,979,548 tons CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent</li> <li>14. e-Pasture Management System implemented by 4 Pasture Management Committees (PMCs) in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts</li> </ol>

Expected Results	Indicators/Targets at End of Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Output 2.3:</b> Degraded rangelands important both for livelihoods and wildlife, including snow leopard prey species in the target districts, rehabilitated through improved local pasture management plans.</li> <li>● <b>Output 2.4:</b> Restoration of degraded forests important for wildlife, including snow leopard prey, and livelihoods of local communities</li> <li>● <b>Output 2.5:</b> Alternative livelihoods program for local communities designed jointly with the local micro-crediting institutions, and launched to support target communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. 186,536 ha of alpine grassland and forest ecosystems under improved conservation management</li> <li>16. 147,268 ha of pastureland under SLM in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts</li> <li>17. Number of people whose livelihoods are affected by land degradation in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts</li> <li>18. Herder/farmer income change (+10%) based on benefits from microfinance/grant program for individuals participating in the program.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 3</b> - Strengthened national capacities for snow leopard conservation, promoting Kyrgyz regional and global cooperation, and setting the scene for up-scaling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Output 3.1:</b> Law enforcement capacities of relevant stakeholders enhanced through trainings on wildlife protection aimed at identification and prosecution of wildlife crime</li> <li>● <b>Output 3.2:</b> Capacities for deployment of international standards for long-term monitoring of parameters critical for snow leopard conservation in national priority landscapes developed, based on international GSLEP monitoring framework.</li> <li>● <b>Output 3.3:</b> Kyrgyzstan participation in the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programs supported, aimed at synergies and coordination of national, transboundary and regional level activities</li> <li>● <b>Output 3.4:</b> Implementation of Kyrgyzstan's NSSLC supported in nationally identified priority landscapes provided, in alignment and coordination with GSLEP and other relevant initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. Level of illegal wildlife trade activity, as indicated by number of snow leopard, snow leopard prey, and other illegal wildlife seizures at border crossings and at Manas international airport, as well as number of arrests related to wildlife trafficking</li> <li>20. International agreement between Kyrgyzstan and at least one bordering country under implementation regarding at least one of the below issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperation on law enforcement at border points regarding illegal wildlife trade</li> <li>• Illegal hunting by border guards</li> <li>• Data sharing on snow leopard monitoring</li> </ul> </li> <li>21. Quality and coverage of snow leopard monitoring data in Kyrgyzstan as indicated by estimated accuracy and timeliness of national snow leopard population estimate</li> </ul>

Source: project document

44. At first glance, the “*logic model*” presented above seems appropriate and provides a good response to national needs/priorities. However, the detailed review of the project “*chain of results*” (see Annex I) indicates that it is an ambitious project with many planned distinct activities (101!) and a somewhat complex project monitoring system. It is a case of “*the devil is in the details*”, particularly when reviewing the planned activities and the targets to be achieved by the project during its lifetime. The strategy includes the introduction of several new concepts such as Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF), Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and SFM certification, Sustainable Land Management (SLM), Joint Forest Management (JFM), new management tools for State National Parks (SNPs), Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), “green” micro-grant scheme, and National Strategy on Snow Leopard Conservation. It is a lot for one project, 4 years and a GEF financing of under \$4M.

45. These new concepts are all valid concepts to be introduced in Kyrgyzstan and they are part of a landscape approach for managing/conserving biodiversity. However, the implementation of these concepts implies the need to develop numerous capacities including institutional capacities, individual capacities and the need to have an adequate enabling environment (policy and legislative frameworks). It partly explains the high number (101) of planned activities detailed in the project document.

46. Nevertheless, despite this ambitious strategy with numerous planned activities to implement several new concepts, the project has been progressing well so far. The project document has been used as a “*blue-print*” by the project management team. As discussed in the previous section, gender considerations, including the empowerment of women is well included in the design of this project and through the micro-grant scheme currently in development, income generation in local communities to improve livelihoods is also part of the project design.

47. Regarding indicators and their respective targets to measure the performance of the project, 6 indicators were identified to measure how well the project is progressing toward its objective; 4 indicators to monitor the

progress under outcome 1; 8 indicators to monitor the progress under outcome 2; and 3 indicators to measure the progress made under outcome 3 (*see table 4 above*) for a total number of indicators of 21. For a project of this size, it is a good number of indicators.

48. However, the review of these indicators indicates a rather convoluted set of performance indicators. Some of these indicators are redundant and not specific enough. The fourth indicator that is “*Area of Jalal-Abad province for which improved biodiversity, forest, and land management measures will be directly influenced by project results: 34,382 ha in SFM; 4,886 ha in restored degraded forests; 147,268 ha in SLM; 87,322 in new protected areas*” is a good example. It includes four different types of measurement: the area under SFM due to the project; the area of degraded forests restored; the area under SLM; and the area in new protected areas. Additionally, this indicator monitoring the performance at the objective level is mostly a summary of several indicators monitoring the progress made at the outcome level; including indicator 12: 4,886 ha of forest resources restored in the landscape; indicator 15: 186,536 ha of alpine grassland and forest ecosystems under improved conservation management; and indicator 16: 147,268 ha of pastureland under SLM in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts.

49. Other indicators do not seem obvious on what they are set to measure. It is the case of indicator 18 “*Herder/farmer income change based on benefits from microfinance/grant program for individuals participating in the program*”. The target at end of project is +10% but it is not clear 10% of what since no values are given as baselines.

50. On the other hand, the Evaluator noted that this set of indicators and targets have taken gender monitoring into consideration. Wherever possible, targets are gender disaggregated, which is guiding the monitoring process to collect disaggregated information by gender.

51. In conclusion, the review of the project strategy and the national context for this project indicates that this strategy is a direct response to national needs and priorities. It is an ambitious project with the introduction of several new biodiversity conservation and management concepts for Kyrgyzstan and as a result, an extended list of activities planned to be implemented over the lifetime of the project. It focuses on four strategic areas: biodiversity conservation in protected areas; ecological integrity of forests in WTS; sustainable pasturelands management in key biodiversity areas of WTS; and national scientific monitoring and law enforcement capacities for snow leopard conservation. This complexity has been well documented in the project document. As a result, the project document has provided a very useful “*blueprint*” for the project team to guide the implementation of the project. So far, the implementation of the project has been contributing to the effort of the government to increase its capacity to conserve and manage biodiversity in Kyrgyzstan (*see next Section 3.2.1*).

## **3.2. Progress Towards Results**

52. This section discusses the assessment of project results; how effective the project is to deliver its expected results and what are the remaining barriers limiting the effectiveness of the project.

### **3.2.1. Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis**

53. As presented in Sections 3.1, the project has been implemented through three (3) outcomes. The implementation progress is measured through a set of 21 indicators and their respective targets. On the next page is a table listing key deliverables achieved so far by the project against each outcome and their corresponding targets. Additionally, a color “*traffic light system*” code was used to represent the level of progress achieved so far by the project, as well as a justification for the given rating (color code)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> The analysis and ratings presented in this Section have been conducted with the assumption that the project will terminate in December 2021 as per its current official ending date.

**Table 5: List of Delivered Results**

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTE Assess
<b>Project Objective:</b> To promote a landscape approach to protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan	1. Population trend of critical species is at least stable over a rolling five-year period. Number of individuals and annual rate of change to be achieved by the end of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new methodology has been developed for conducting flora and fauna inventories and zoning. It was approved by an SAEPP order (No.01-9/180 - June 28, 2018).</li> <li>Flora and fauna inventories and zoning of the new PAs was completed.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SNP Alatai: 162 quarters were rated, 3,263 units on an area of 56,826.4 hectares. Of these, in the conservation zone - 438 units per 13,891.8 hectares, in the zone of ecological stabilization 374 units on 1,963.4 hectares, in the zone of tourist and recreation activities - 140 units on 1,384.6 hectares, in the zone of limited economic activity – 2,311 units on 39,586.6 hectares.</li> <li>SNP Kan-Achuu: The external and internal boundaries of SNP Kan-Achuu were determined over a length of 240 km, 1,065 units were rated, 71 quarters on 30,496.5 ha. Of these, in the conservation zone - 395 units on 10,761.9 ha, in the zone of ecological stabilization 184 units on 4,383.6 ha, in the zone of tourist and recreation activities - 122 units on 3,053.2 ha, in the zone of limited economic activity - 364 units on 12,297.8 ha.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Forest management work was completed in the state natural park Kan-Achuu and the state natural park Alatai with the collaboration of experts of the National Academy of Sciences.</li> <li>The territory of the Western Tien Shan (WTS) remains poorly studied and, unfortunately, the data is fragmented;</li> <li>The methodology of accounting hoofed mammals requires improvement;</li> <li>2018 data:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snow leopard (<i>Panthera uncia</i>): 40;</li> <li>Ibex (<i>Capra sibirica</i>): 3124;</li> <li>Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>): 0;</li> <li>Tian Shan white clawed bear (<i>Ursus arctos isabellinus</i>): 164</li> </ul> </li> <li>2019 data:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snow leopard (<i>Panthera uncia</i>): 31;</li> <li>Ibex (<i>Capra sibirica</i>): 3050;</li> <li>Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>): 0;</li> <li>Tian Shan white clawed bear (<i>Ursus arctos isabellinus</i>): 234</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	2. Index of area and forest quality of globally significant flora in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All key stakeholders are involved in the inventory, including the SAEPP, Institute of Forestry of the Academy of Science, PA counterparts.</li> <li>The inventory reported by State Institution “Kyrgyz Forestry and Hunting Management” is as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Semenov’s fir (<i>Abies Semenovii</i>) – 4,930.5 ha</li> <li>Juniper (<i>Juniperus</i> sp.) - 9204,6 Ha</li> <li>Relict spruce (<i>Picea schrenkiana</i>) – 4,322.2 ha</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTE Assess
	3. No degraded pastureland areas in four target A/As in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established good partnerships with all partners involved in pasture management, including ARIS, Association of pasture management committees “<i>Kyrgyz Jaiyty</i>” and Pasture Department under the Ministry of Agriculture;</li> <li>Upgrading of the Electronic Pasture Management System underway;</li> <li>Induction seminars to introduce the system conducted in four (4) pasture management committees;</li> <li>Economic, geobotanic assessment and mapping are underway;</li> <li>Review of existing pasture management plans of the targeted pasture management committees is underway as well the development of integrated management plans;</li> <li>Set up four (4) demonstration sites (0.6 ha in total) to conduct monitoring activities of degraded pastures;</li> <li>Jointly with the <i>Kok Yrim ayil aimak</i> in Toguz Toro region, supported activities on restoring degraded pastures (250 ha) and provided sainfoin seeds;</li> <li>Work is underway with pasture management committees in the pilot areas, including the revision of plans for the development of residential complexes to take into account the issues of buffer zones and migration corridors of wild animals.</li> </ul>	
	4. Area of Jalal-Abad province for which improved biodiversity, forest, and land management measures will be directly influenced by project results: 34,382 ha in SFM; 4,886 ha in restored degraded forests; 147,268 ha in SLM; 87,322 in new protected areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jointly with the World Bank project, provided support to develop an integrated management plan for Toktogul Leskhoz (72,324 ha);</li> <li>Support to promote natural regeneration on an area of about 7,200 ha, and new plantings on about 250 ha;</li> <li>In the territory of the Alatai NP, the disputed areas around the lake Kara-Suu of 1,662.8 ha were transferred to NP (SAEPF order of 01.01.2019 No. 01-9/10) and in collaboration with of the SNP Alatai project, the lake Kara-Suu was excluded from the list of fish hosts of the Ministry of Agriculture;</li> <li>Procured computers, laptops, walkie-talkies, cameras, trail cameras, GPS equipment, binoculars and telescopes to Rangers of Alatai and Kan-Achuu NPs to improve the study of flora and fauna of the SNPs, to effectively combat poachers and monitor wild animals and plants;</li> <li>Procured tents, sleeping bags, backpacks, ground pads and lanterns to Rangers to facilitate their fieldwork as well as riding horses with sets of horse equipment to make it easier for rangers to move in mountainous areas;</li> <li>Improved work condition of Rangers in two SNPs, have translated into a more effective management and protection of these parks covering an area of 88,985 ha (including the transferred area of 1,663 ha);</li> </ul>	
	5. Area of Jalal-Abad province for which improved biodiversity, forest, and land management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas of the two pilot SNPs (88,985 ha), SFM land (34,382 ha), afforested area (7,450 ha), and SLM land (147,268 ha) covered in these districts under direct coverage above;</li> <li>Well-established partnerships with all involved partners including district and regional administrations, local NGOs, public communities as women, youth censors, pasture management committees</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTE Assess
	measures will be indirectly influenced by project results for a total area of 944,317 ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed existing development strategies of the targeted districts and management plans of institutions (forestry, protected area plans, pasture management committees and regional administrations) involved in sustainable land management</li> <li>Mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management and joint forest management in these strategies and plans is underway; which will indirectly influence positively biodiversity conservation and forest and land management in the area of Jalal-Abad province</li> </ul>	
	6. Population of Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts that have derived indirect livelihood benefits from project results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A total of about 5,770 people from local communities in the pilot districts took part in information campaigns calling for nature conservation and respect for biodiversity (42% women);</li> <li>Conducted an initial needs assessment to identify needs for a micro-grant scheme. A draft concept of the microgrant program was developed. A first tranche of USD 100k will be deployed within local communities in the coming year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toktogul District communities of Cholpon-Ata and Kyzyl-Ozgorush - 20,166 people: 9,879 women and 10,287 men</li> <li>Toguz-Toro District communities of Kok-Irim and Atai - 5,836 people: 2,864 women and 2,972 men</li> </ul> </li> <li>In July 2018, a study tour was organized to SNP Khan-Teniri, in the region of Issyk-Kul, for 30 representatives of the Steering Board of Alatau and Kan-Achuu SNPs. Reviewed results of another completed GEF-UNDP project “<i>Improving Efficiency Management in the Mountains of the Central Tien Shan</i>”, including alternative sources of income.</li> </ul>	
<b>Outcome 1</b> - Conservation and sustainable management of Key Biodiversity Areas within landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Output 1.1:</b> Expanded operational SPNA network in the Western Tian Shan region through support to operationalize the two new State Nature Parks of Alatau and Kan-Achuu</li> <li><b>Output 1.2:</b> Upgraded status of HCVF, and sustainable forest management involving local communities</li> </ul>	7. Management effectiveness of key alpine protected areas in Jalal-Abad province covering 286,099 ha (METT score)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>METT Score: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alatau SNP (new PA): 23</li> <li>Padysh-Ata SNR: 46</li> <li>Dashman SNR: 44</li> <li>Kan-Achuu SNP (new PA): 21</li> <li>Besh Aral SNR: 47</li> <li>Sary-Chelek SBR: 59</li> <li>Saimaluu-Tash SNP: 40</li> </ul> </li> <li>Conducted METT training for all PAs in Western Tian Shan;</li> <li>In collaboration with WWF Kyrgyzstan provided support to the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and PAs to prepare the METT assessment guide. It was approved by the SAEPP Order No. 01-9/148 of May 22, 2018.</li> </ul>	
	8. HCVF management approach has legal basis, and relevant regulations are produced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carried out an initial review of the legal and regulatory framework, which concluded that the HCVF management approach is not reflected in existing legal framework. It demonstrated a high interest from key project partners (Forestry Department under the State Agency, Forestry Institute, etc.) in improving the legal framework to include this new concept;</li> <li>Jointly with the UNDP Kazakhstan an international expert was engaged to conduct the first review and develop a draft concept of HVCF;</li> <li>Supported representatives of Kyrgyzstan to attend the Regional Workshop in Almaty to discuss the approaches of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) identification, including the methodological</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTE Assess
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Output 1.3:</b> Enhanced management and conservation capacities of Western Tian Shan PAs in Jalal-Abad Province, and strengthened HCVF management</li> <li>• <b>Output 1.4:</b> Strengthened participatory patrolling, enforcement and surveillance systems of new and existing PAs through the Local PA Management Board and joint patrol groups to enforce anti-poaching</li> </ul>		<p>aspects of analysis and assessment of the forest funds of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and the different categories of HCVF. Participants identified barriers and opportunities for implementing the HCVF approach in their countries and reviewed international best practices;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed the first draft of the HCVF concept for Kyrgyzstan and the methodology for determining forests of this category. This draft concept will be reviewed and approved at a seminar later in 2019.</li> </ul>	
	9. Existence of HCVF management measures in FMPs and level of implementation in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From the six groups of HCVF, the Kyrgyz team proposed to set up four groups as relevant for Kyrgyzstan by merging HCV 1 with HCV 3 and HCV 2 with HCV 4. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HCV 1 &amp; 3 - Concentrations of biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened or endangered species, that are significant at global, regional or national levels; and rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems, habitats or refugia.</li> <li>○ HCV 2 &amp; 4 - Large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance; and basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes.</li> <li>○ HCV 5 - Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of local communities or indigenous peoples (for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, etc.), identified through engagement with these communities or indigenous peoples.</li> <li>○ HCV 6 - Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological, economic or religious/sacred importance for the traditional cultures of local communities or indigenous peoples, identified through engagement with these local communities or indigenous peoples.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• This selection will need to be finalized and the decision for the final classification of HCVF for Kyrgyzstan should be concluded later in 2019.</li> </ul>	
	10. 1,000 hectares patrolled per week in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified training needs on anti-poaching for anti-poaching patrols of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Conservation Department of the SAEPF;</li> <li>• Partners such as SAEPF, local NGOs, Academy of Science, local representatives in pilot areas, learned from the joint site visit of community-based conservancy experiences (i.e. Panthera in Chon Kemin valley);</li> <li>• In collaboration with the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and PAs, conducted outreach meetings with local communities on the creation of community patrols;</li> <li>• Following these meetings two groups of a total of about 20 Freelance Rangers from local communities were established in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts, including two women. These Freelance Rangers participate in joint rounds with Rangers in the SNPs. They also received uniforms and technical equipment for increasing efficiency in anti-poaching activities.</li> </ul>	



Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTE Assess
<p><b>Outcome 2 – Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in Western Tian Shan are enhanced by regulating land and forest use in buffer zones and corridors and support to sustainable livelihoods.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Output 2.1:</b> Identified and designated buffer zones for new SPNAs and wildlife corridors between relevant SPNAs</li> <li><b>Output 2.2:</b> Territorial development plans of Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts and communities aligned with biodiversity conservation, SFM and SLM objectives</li> <li><b>Output 2.3:</b> Degraded rangelands important both for livelihoods and wildlife, including snow leopard prey species in the target districts, rehabilitated through improved local pasture management plans.</li> <li><b>Output 2.4:</b> Restoration of degraded forests important for wildlife, including snow leopard prey, and livelihoods of local communities</li> <li><b>Output 2.5:</b> Alternative livelihoods program for local communities</li> </ul>	11. >40,000 ha of sustainably managed forest in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No progress can be reported yet. Actions in this area will follow the adoption of the HVCF concept and methodology (<i>see Targets 8 &amp; 9 above</i>).</li> </ul>	
	12. 4,886 ha of forest resources restored in the landscape (500 ha reforestation/afforestation, 4,500 ha supported for natural regeneration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>250 ha afforestation and 7,200 ha support for natural regeneration;</li> <li>In agreement with the Department of Forest Ecosystem Development, 4 plots for reforestation have been identified. In the spring 2018, planting was carried out on an area of 94 ha, in the autumn of 2018, preparatory work was carried out for planting on an area of 50 ha, but 100 ha were planted during the spring of 2019. A further 200 ha were identified for next year. The main species planted are: Tien Shan spruce, walnut, almond and pistachio.</li> <li>This activity is progressing at a slower pace than anticipated due mostly to the seasonality of forest reforestation works (e.g. tree planting). This risk will remain valid in coming years; however, the project has undertaken some preventive measures to minimize this risk by securing preliminary agreements on all planned activities with SAEP prior to each planting season;</li> <li>Materials for fencing plantations to prevent damage by livestock was transferred to communities where plantings were carried out. A total of more than 70 tons of materials;</li> <li>Negotiations with communities at 2 sites are underway to procure fencing materials to promote natural regeneration.</li> </ul>	
	13. Lifetime indirect GHG emissions avoided of 2,979,548 tons CO2 equivalent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No progress has been reported yet. Methodology to calculate the emissions and emission reductions is ongoing with the National communication on climate change project team.</li> </ul>	
	14. e-Pasture Management System implemented by 4 Pasture Management Committees (PMCs) in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported organization of a series of roundtables and field meetings to familiarize pasture users with an e-Pasture Management System. Meetings were also held with the main partners in pasture-related projects such as ARIS, the World Bank, GIZ and the head of the Pasture Department under the Ministry of Agriculture. 2019 was named the Year of Digitalization and Regional Development by the President of Kyrgyzstan, which is an additional incentive for partners to implement such a system;</li> <li>Revision and improvement of the existing pasture management system is underway as well as on-site training for pilot pasture management committees.</li> </ul>	
	15. 186,536 ha of alpine grassland and forest ecosystems under improved conservation management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working groups have been created under district administrations to revise regional development strategies and integrate biodiversity conservation concepts. As a result, biodiversity conservation management has been improving in the area where the project pilots are, including the following areas: two pilot PAs (88,985 ha), SFM (34,382 ha), afforested area (7,450 ha), and SLM (147,268 ha).</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTE Assess
designed jointly with the local micro-crediting institutions, and launched to support target communities	16. 147,268 ha of pastureland under SLM in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities in progress and linked to the introduction of the revised e-pasture management system in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts;</li> <li>About 300 ha were restored through the procurement of seed for degraded pastures;</li> <li>Areas of the new SNPs are now closed to grazing; as a result, pastures in SNPs should be restored naturally in the next 5 years;</li> <li>Developed an integrated management plan with partners in the Toktogul district with the focus on biodiversity conservation. Area adjacent to the SNP Alatai (72,324 ha);</li> <li>Inventory of nature reserves in Western Tien Shan is underway;</li> <li>Due to the lack of primary and legal documents for nature reserves, the need for a comprehensive assessment of the status of nature reserves was identified. In collaboration with the State Archive of Kyrgyzstan, primary materials from nature reserves were collected and a guideline to conduct inventories in nature reserves was developed, reviewed by SAEPF and approved by the Order No. 01-9/314 of December 17, 2018.</li> </ul>	
	17. Number of people whose livelihoods are affected by land degradation in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An in-depth assessment of livelihoods affected by land degradation in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts is being prepared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toktogul District communities of Cholpon-Ata and Kyzyl-Ozgorush – 20,166 people: 9,879 women and 10,287 men</li> <li>Toguz-Toro District communities of Kok-Irim and Atai 5,836 people: 2,864 women and 2,972 men.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	18. Herder/farmer income change (+10%) based on benefits from microfinance/grant program for individuals participating in the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No progress is reported yet, waiting for the implementation of the micro-grant scheme, which should generate income for local communities including herders and farmers.</li> <li>The micro-grant concept was developed and discussed with local communities. Discussions are currently taking place with local micro-finance organizations such as Bai tushum, and Aiyl Bank. Green criteria for micro-projects being developed. A first tranche of USD 100k should be deployed within local communities in the coming year.</li> </ul>	
<b>Outcome 3</b> - Strengthened national capacities for snow leopard conservation, promoting Kyrgyz regional and global cooperation, and setting the scene for up-scaling. <b>• Output 3.1:</b> Law enforcement capacities	<b>• Level of illegal wildlife trade activity, as indicated by number of snow leopard, snow leopard prey, and other illegal wildlife seizures at border crossings and at Manas international airport, as well as</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the participation to the four-day seminar under the CITES convention, procured uniforms to the dog service.</li> <li>Work is underway to design and construct an open-air cage for 4 dogs for the dog service at the Manas (Bishkek) airport to improve the control of illegal wildlife trade;</li> <li>Facilitated meetings within the context of the Memorandum of Understanding on illegal wildlife trade data sharing between the SAEPF, Law Enforcement, Customs Services and the Academy of Sciences.</li> <li>Ongoing discussions with representatives of WWF-Russia on training with the involvement of dogs to combat poaching.</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTE Assess
<p>of relevant stakeholders enhanced through trainings on wildlife protection aimed at identification and prosecution of wildlife crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Output 3.2:</b> Capacities for deployment of international standards for long-term monitoring of parameters critical for snow leopard conservation in national priority landscapes developed, based on international GSLEP monitoring framework.</li> <li>● <b>Output 3.3:</b> Kyrgyzstan participation in the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programs supported, aimed at synergies and coordination of national, transboundary and regional level activities</li> <li>● <b>Output 3.4:</b> Implementation of Kyrgyzstan's NSSLC supported in nationally identified priority landscapes provided, in alignment and coordination with GSLEP and other relevant initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>number of arrests related to wildlife trafficking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In cooperation with the Department of Security Council and PAs, work is underway on the problems linked with wildlife disease. A memorandum has been concluded and a plan has been drawn up to address this issue with the State Inspectorate for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Security;</li> <li>● Trainings on collecting tests were conducted for Rangers throughout the country;</li> <li>● 2019 has been declared the year of digitalization and development of regions. As a result, a greater attention is being paid on the use of digital technologies and improving access to data. Within this context, the project supports the development of an e-PA Information System that will serve as an effective tool to manage PAs. This system should also include the snow leopard database and the user database;</li> <li>● Produced 8 videos (plastic, planting, eco-volunteer, etc.) that were actively distributed and also broadcasted on KTR (free of charge on the initiative of KTRC);</li> <li>● As part of raising awareness on biodiversity conservation, a short video (3 min) of infographics is planned to be released soon.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● International agreement between Kyrgyzstan and at least one bordering country under implementation regarding at least one of the below issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cooperation on law enforcement at border points regarding illegal wildlife trade</li> <li>○ Illegal hunting by border guards</li> <li>○ Data sharing on snow leopard monitoring</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● After declaring the Western Tien Shan as one of the important transboundary landscapes for biodiversity conservation and snow leopard habitat, the project supported consultation meetings with partners from Central Asian countries, including support from representatives of the GSLEP Secretariat to participate in these events. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Coordination meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, July 2018. Discussion were held on establishing a Memorandum of Cooperation on the Conservation of the Snow Leopard;</li> <li>○ Meeting in Khujand, Tajikistan, April 2019. Further review by countries of a Memorandum of Cooperation on the Conservation of the Snow Leopard and its habitat. Also creating a regional genetic laboratory for the study of snow leopard were discussed;</li> <li>○ At these meetings agreements were reached on conducting joint expeditions to record and monitor the snow leopard population, exchange of data and information, where possible, according to the laws of each countries;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Products developed for the <i>International Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Forum (Bishkek, August 2017)</i> continue to be actively used both by the project and partners, including in other countries (India, Nepal, Bhutan, Russia, etc.). It includes: 3-D application Arloopa, video 360, theater performance, photo book, video and products, etc.).</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Quality and coverage of snow leopard monitoring data in Kyrgyzstan as indicated by estimated accuracy and timeliness of national</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A Snow Leopard Monitoring Database is being developed in partnership with all relevant stakeholders: Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Areas, Panthera, Snow Leopard Trust, NABU etc. The project managed to unite all key parties to improve coordination for better synergies and information sharing through regular meetings and joint planning of activities;</li> <li>● Snow Leopard monitoring methodology is being developed jointly with the GSLEP Secretariat and the official adoption of this methodology is expected later in 2019;</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTE Assess
	snow leopard population estimate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Started the development/adaptation of protocols, as well as methodologies for conducting research on the snow leopard on the territory of Western Tian Shan;</li> <li>Procured 50 camera traps, which will be transferred to both the Alatau and Kan-Achuu SNPs in addition to the 25 camera traps that they already have to monitor/study the fauna in these SNPs.</li> </ul>	

Source: Adapted from project progress reports, mostly from PIRs 2018 & 2019.

	Target achieved
	On target to be achieved
	Not on target to be achieved

54. Overall, the project is progressing well towards its targets and it has two and a half more years of implementation to go. This is an ambitious project with many “*moving parts*” and its scope is reflected in the rather long list of achievements presented in table 5 above. Nevertheless, the project management team has been able to implement activities and deliver intermediate results as planned in the project strategy; it is on track to be a successful project by December 2021.

55. Under **Outcome 1** (*GEF budget USD 1,600,000 – Used USD 632,282 or 40%*), the project has introduced the METT methodology, including a guide to conduct METT assessment, which was officialized by a SAEPP Order. Using this methodology, METT scores have been established for all PAs in WTS. The review of these scores indicates a low score for the two new SNPs (Alatai and Kan-Achuu). Within the context of the recently established SNPs (2), the project procured critical equipment to Rangers to better monitor and surveil fauna and flora in these 2 parks as well as equipment to facilitate their fieldwork, including riding horses and camping equipment. In addition, the project has been introducing the HVCF concept in the forestry sector and a methodology to apply this concept to forests in Kyrgyzstan should be approved later in 2019. Finally, under this outcome, the project has also been active in supporting capacity development activities to strengthen patrolling and surveilling PAs in WTS; particularly strengthening patrol groups to enforce anti-poaching, including the creation of local groups of Freelance Rangers.

56. This outcome has been progressing well and it should be completed by the end of the project. As a result of the project, Kyrgyzstan should be better equipped with management tools to better manage its forests and its protected areas.

57. Under **Outcome 2** (*GEF budget USD 1,608,576 – Used USD 377,397 or 24%*), the project has focused on two areas: sustainable forest management and pasture management. Some plantations (including fencing) took place to restore some forest resources. Regarding strengthening pasture management, the focus of the project is on revising/improving the existing electronic pasture management system as well as on restoring degraded pastures and on the use of the revised e-Pasture Management System by herders/farmers. In addition, the project also supporting the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation in local development planning in the Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts. Working groups were established to revise local plans and integrate biodiversity conservation concept into these plans. Finally, a micro-grant scheme is being developed to provide small “green” grants to herders and farmers, in order to improve livelihoods of local communities. A first tranche of USD 100k should be deployed in the coming year.

58. The progress under this outcome 2 is slower than under outcome 1. Part of the reasons are the fact that some activities related to forestry management are dependent on the officialization of the HCVF concept (Output 1.2 & 1.3) and that the micro-grant scheme has not started yet. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that all activities should be completed by the end of the project. The piloting of new management approaches for forests and pastures should be demonstrated by December 2021; and, when considering the enthusiasm of local communities observed by the Evaluator to access the micro-grant scheme, it is anticipated that additional incomes should be generated and should contribute to increasing the livelihoods of these communities.

59. Under **Outcome 3** (*GEF budget USD 590,068 – Used USD 252,170 or 43%*), the project focuses on two main areas: illegal wildlife trade and Snow Leopard conservation. So far it has procured the Dog Service staff at the Manas (Bishkek) airport with uniforms. It is also in the process of procuring an open-air cage for 4 dogs for the service to improve the control of the illegal wildlife trade at the airport. The project is also seeking to support training of dogs to combat poaching. Regarding the conservation of Snow Leopard, the project has been supporting national stakeholders, including the GSLEP Secretariat, to participate in consultation meetings with Central Asian countries for the development of a Memorandum of Cooperation on the Conservation of the Snow Leopard and its habitat. The project also supports the development of a Snow Leopard Monitoring database and a monitoring methodology to monitor the Snow Leopard population as well as procuring 50 camera traps to strengthen the equipment necessary for wildlife monitoring; particularly Snow Leopard. Finally, a series of information products were developed for the International Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Forum (Bishkek, August 2017) and are still much used by the project in various fora to raise awareness about wildlife conservation, particularly Snow Leopard conservation.

60. Similar to outcome 1, this outcome 3 is progressing well and it should be completed by the end of the project in December 2021. Key stakeholders should be better equipped to monitor wildlife, in particular Snow

Leopard, and also have a greater capacity to surveil illegal wildlife trade in Kyrgyzstan.

61. Nevertheless, despite the good progress made by the project in its first half, the broad scope of the project strategy raises two critical questions: how sustainable capacities developed with the support of the project are? Is the project spreading its resources too thin due to too many intervention areas and too many activities to be implemented? As discussed in Section 3.1.2, the strategy of the project includes the introduction of several new management concepts to conserve biodiversity such as METT, HCVF, SFM, PES, etc. These concepts require a lot of capacity development activities for being introduced in key organizations responsible for managing and conserving biodiversity.

62. The implementation of the project is certainly adhering to its strategy designed at the outset. However, will activities implemented during the lifetime of the project be enough to ensure the sustainability of project achievements? At this point in time, this is a valid and a critical question that needs to be reviewed carefully in order to maximize the sustainability of project achievements. Good progress has been made, particularly in strengthening the enabling environment to better manage and conserve biodiversity. It includes few methodologies and concepts which were (or soon-to-be) officialized. The progress made in this area should be welcome and address some shortcomings in this area (legal framework) as stated in the “*6<sup>th</sup> National Report for the Convention on Biological Diversity*”. These results should also be sustained over the long term since they are now part of the official instruments to manage, monitor and surveil the natural capital in Kyrgyzstan.

63. However, the sustainability of other activities implemented to raise skills and knowledge of staff, including Rangers and participating local communities, as well as the strengthening of organizational processes and systems are less obvious. Progress has been made but will it be enough to sustain the introduction of these new concepts and produce a lasting positive change in illegal wildlife trade and in biodiversity conservation? More activities will be implemented in these areas between now and the end of the project but as discussed above, due to many intervention areas, project resources may be spread too thin. As a mitigative measure, it is recommended to review the strategy of the project and assess the existing capacities and capacity needs to identify where project resources should focus for the remaining implementation period of the project.

64. In conclusion, the project has made good progress so far and it has 30 more months of implementation. The implementation adheres to the project strategy detailed in the project document. The review and field observations collected for this evaluation indicate that the project is implemented with good participative approaches and good partnerships with key stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan. SAEPF and its departments have been much involved in leading the implementation of project activities, which should contribute to a good sustainability of project achievements. However, due to the broad scope of this project, including the introduction of several new management concepts, the question remains as to wondering if project resources are not spread too thin, which could hamper the sustainability of project achievements. A recommendation is made above to mitigate this risk.

### **3.2.2. Remaining Barriers to Achieve the Project Objective**

65. The project started in January 2017 and will end in December 2021. At the time of this review, the project is in its 31st month of implementation with 29 more months to go before it ends. At this point, there is no critical barriers limiting its implementation over the remaining implementation period. As discussed in the previous section, the project overall effectiveness will depend much on how sustainable capacities developed with the project will be. So far, good progress has been made in most planned intervention areas; however, this is an ambitious project with a broad scope and the question remains as to will activities supported by the project be enough to sustain the achievements over the long term.

66. At the strategic level, the rationale of the project for promoting a comprehensive integrated landscape approach for the protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan was to remove three critical barriers that are preventing the implementation of the long-term solution, which consists in a comprehensive integrated landscape management approach, including the livelihood needs of local populations and protected areas as anchors of conservation within a productive semi-forested pastoral alpine landscape. These barriers were: (i) weak management of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) including inadequate coverage for the spatial range of threatened species, most notably the snow leopard and prey; (ii) unsustainable management of land and forest

in the wider landscape including poor focus on ecological requirements of wildlife (lack of corridors for wildlife habitat), including rare and threatened species such as snow leopard; and (iii) low uptake of and capacity to implement international best practices for snow leopard conservation and management of its habitat.

67. The project – through its activities - has been addressing these three barriers, which ultimately will gauge the overall effectiveness of the project at the end. Removing these barriers is critical for improving biodiversity conservation in WTS; including Snow Leopard conservation. As discussed in previous sections, this project is timely and responds to national priorities. It is making progress in strengthening the management of PAs but also ensuring biodiversity conservation in the wider landscape outside of these PAs, while at the same time seeking to increase the generation of incomes for local communities in order to improve their livelihoods and to ensure they become good stewards of the local biodiversity. However, the project strategy is broad and ambitious. Considering the time left to implement the second part of this project, it is recommended to conduct capacity assessments of key government organizations and staff and identify any remaining gaps, which could/should be addressed before the end of the project.

### **3.3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**

68. This section discusses the assessment of how the project has been implemented. It assessed how efficient the management of the project has been and how conducive it is to contribute to a successful project implementation.

#### **3.3.1. Management Arrangements**

69. The management arrangements of the WTS project is as follows:

- The *GEF Agency* for this project is UNDP. As the project is implemented under the DIM modality, it is also the *Executing Entity* and the *Implementing Partner* of the project. It is responsible for the overall implementation of the project; including procurement and contracting, human resources management, and financial services.
- The *Implementing Partner/Responsible Partner* of the project is the State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF). It is responsible for the overall realization of project results, including the facilitation of all project activities.
- The project is guided by a *Project Board (PB)* as the executive decision-making body of the project. It was established and the first meeting took place on December 7, 2017; 2 other meetings took place: July 2018 and February 2019. It is chaired by the Deputy Director of SAEPF and consists of 17 representatives of government agencies, international/national NGOs, two head of target government districts and four independent observers from civil society. The PB is responsible for making management decisions, in particular when guidance is required by the Project Coordinator. It plays a critical role in project monitoring and evaluations by assuring the quality of these processes and associated products, and by using evaluations for improving performance, accountability and learning. The PB ensures that required resources are committed. It also arbitrates on any conflicts within the project and negotiate solutions. The PB approves any essential deviations from the original plans.
- The PB contains three distinct roles: (i) *Executive Role*, a member who represents the project “owners” and chair the group. SAEPF appointed a senior official to this role; (ii) *Senior Supplier Role*, a member who represents the interests of the funding parties for specific cost sharing projects and/or technical expertise to the project. This role is fulfilled by the Resident Representative of UNDP-Kyrgyzstan; and (iii) *Senior Beneficiary Role*, a member representing the interests of those who will ultimately benefit from the project and ensuring the realization of project results from their perspective. This role rests with key Stakeholders in the project.
- A *National Project Management Unit (PMU)* was established at the beginning of the project. It is part of the UNDP national project management unit located in Bishkek. It is headed by a *Project Coordinator (PC)* who is in charge of the overall implementation of the project. It is supported by an *Administrative and Financial Assistant* and a *Driver*. The PC and her staff oversee the implementation of component/outcome 1 and 2 and are directly implementing outcome 3 at the national level. The PC reports to the UNDP Dimension Chief on Sustainable Development and



to the PMU Manager. The PC is tasked with the day-to-day management of project activities, as well as with financial and administrative reporting. She is responsible for implementing project activities under the guidance of Annual Work Plans, following UNDP Results Based Management standards. The PC prepares Annual Work Plans (AWPs) in advance of each successive year and submit them to the PB for approval.

- One Project Implementation Unit (PIU) was established in Toktogul, Jalal-Abad Province to implement activities under components/outcomes 1 and 2. It is comprised of two *Field Specialists* and one *Driver*.
- The *Project Quality Assurance* role is fulfilled by the Programme and Policy Analyst in charge of Environment/Energy and Disaster Risk Management of UNDP-Kyrgyzstan, and its Programme Oversight and Support Unit.

70. Within the context of the DIM Authorization for the Kyrgyzstan Country Programme for the period 2012-2016 granted by UNDP RBEC Regional Director on January 11th, 2012, the implementation modality of the project to allocate, administer and report on project resources has been the DIM approach. As per this modality, UNDP took on the role of Implementing Partner. It has the technical and administrative capacity to assume the responsibility for mobilizing and applying effectively the required inputs in order to reach the expected outputs of the project. UNDP assumes the overall management responsibility and accountability for the implementation of the project. It follows all policies and procedures established for its own operations.

71. The review indicates that the management arrangements as planned at the outset of the project are adequate in the context of Kyrgyzstan for the implementation of the project. The project is implemented by a good technical team of professionals bringing together a broad range of skills and knowledge in protected areas, forestry and pasture management, biodiversity conservation, local livelihood, and capacity development areas. The project also benefits from strong partnerships between government entities, particularly SAEPF as the *Responsible Partner* of the project, UNDP, regional and local government entities, non-governmental organizations, including organizations focusing on the conservation and habitats of Snow Leopard and local communities involved in the project. The result is a project that is implemented in close collaboration with relevant governmental and non-governmental entities as well as with local communities in the project areas.

### 3.3.2. Stakeholder Engagement

72. As discussed in section 3.1.1, the project is relevant to national priorities. It was developed through local and national stakeholders' consultations during the PPG phase, including workshops, focus groups with different social groups including women to capture their views and aspirations, field trips and one-to-one meetings. These consultations were held with national, regional and local government entities, development partners, academic institutions, NGOs and members of local communities in project areas. It included a joint expedition of two institutes of the National Academy of Sciences (Institute for Biology and Soils and Forest Research Institute) and SAEPF to confirm the species list in the targeted region and verify the biodiversity significance of the project sites. It also included a capacity needs assessment, which has been used to develop relevant training programmes to be implemented with the support of the project.

73. In the meantime, during the PPG phase, the project also conducted a stakeholder analysis to identify key stakeholders and assess their respective roles and responsibilities. The table below is a summary of the plan to involve stakeholders developed at the outset of the project.

**Table 6: Initial Stakeholders Involvement Plan**

Stakeholder	Role in Project
• State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF)	• Main implementation partner hosting the Department on Protected Areas, the key stakeholder for the elaboration of the National PA planning framework,
• WS GSLECP	• Ensuring organization of new PAs; as well as managerial and financial sustainability of the national PA system.

Stakeholder	Role in Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Agriculture, Processing Industry and Melioration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key partner in the development and implementation of the pasture management plans at target areas.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Registration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic (SRS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SRS will coordinate and control the registration of land property rights in the vicinity of the project sites. Within its mandate, it is responsible for the following: 1) regulating of land relations (state registration deed, land cadastre) in the new PA, corridors and buffer zone; and 2) topography survey and mapping of the PA to prepare state registration deed for land users</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Agency on Local Self- Governance and Interethnic Relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration of SLM and biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management issues into local development plans and their further implementation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Province and District administrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support to the establishment of the new PAs and integration of biodiversity conservation into corresponding administrative level development strategies and plans</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Self Governance Bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These bodies are responsible for the elaboration and implementation of local communities' development strategies including local environment issues. They will be among the main project implementing partners at the local level in integrated land use planning, buffer zones and corridor</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Associations of Pasture and Water Users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They are the users of ecosystem services regulating access of local communities to natural resources and sustainable use of biodiversity and they will provide inputs to the development of the landscape level management plan for Tian Shan that defines buffer zones and conservation-friendly uses in sensitive areas, as well as play a role in the development and implementation of alternative sustainable livelihoods</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities of the PA buffer zones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active users of ecosystem services and to be involved in PA management and sustainable use practices to be promoted by the project.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snow Leopard Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foundation implementing snow leopard conservation project in Central Tian Shan aimed at habitat range monitoring, promoting anti-poaching and livelihoods for local communities, will be a partner in the project for relevant activities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kyrgyzstan Association of Forest and Land Users, CAMP Alatau, and RDF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These NGOs will be involved to advocate for sustainable biodiversity conservation and use and to promote Joint Forest Management practice and HCVF concept and SFM certification piloting, as well as joint patrolling. They will be also involved into development of the pasture management plans and land use plans in buffer zones and corridors jointly with local communities and state administrations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kyrgyz community-based tourism association (KCBTA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be involved in training of local communities to develop ecological tourism facilities and infrastructure for PAs financial sustainability as well as marketing of such community-based tours.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ayil Bank and micro-credit companies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The bank has experience in supporting agriculture and rural development and is considered one of the key potential partners of the implementation of the Micro Credit Alternative Livelihoods Facility.</li> </ul>

Source: project document

74. The extensive consultations and analysis conducted during the PPG phase ensured that this project responds well to national priorities (*see also Section 3.1.1*). As presented in the table above, the consultation process was concluded with the identification of stakeholders to the project and clear roles from each partner in implementing/participating in the various components of the project. However, despite a good analysis of stakeholders at the outset of the project, no specific strategy was identified in the project document to secure their engagement in the implementation of the project.

75. Nevertheless, despite the lack of a stakeholder engagement strategy developed at the outset of the project, the project implementation team has been able to engage well all key stakeholders in the implementation of the project. The Evaluator found that the good consultation and engagement of stakeholders during the PPG phase has continued during the implementation of project activities. Since the implementation

began, stakeholders have been kept engaged through project activities including PB meetings. Based on interviews and observations conducted for this evaluation, the project enjoys excellent partnerships with relevant government entities at all levels (national, regional and local); including ARIS, Association of Pasture Committees as well as non-governmental organizations such as NABU, Irbis, GSLEP, UCA, and Snow Leopard Foundation/Trust.

76. In addition, the project also enjoys an excellent coordination approach with other related donor-funded projects. It particularly includes these related projects:

- BIOFIN<sup>6</sup> project implemented by UNDP (phase 1: \$0.47k – 2016-2019 and phase 2: \$0.25k – 2019-2021) supports results-oriented budgeting as a financial solution to improve financing for biodiversity related expenditure and prioritize species conservation (Snow Leopard and prey species). The project supported an *Environmental Finance Policy and Institutional Review*, as well as an expense review in the environmental area. Based on these findings, the BIOFIN project proposed a set of 11 solutions to finance biodiversity conservation.
- FAO project “*Sustainable Management of Mountainous Forest and Land Resources under Climate Change Conditions*” funded by the GEF (\$5.5M – 2014-2019). It focuses on three areas: (i) strengthening the enabling environment for sustainable forest and land management; (ii) enhancing carbon stocks in dryland mountain forests; and (iii) promoting and demonstrating climate resilient agriculture.
- GIZ funded project “*Adaptation to climate change through sustainable forest management*” (\$3.1 - ??-2020) promoting integrated natural resource management, including land use: forest and pastures. It has facilitated the negotiation and conclusion of Joint Forest Management (JFM) contracts with local communities.
- World Bank project “*Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management*” funded by the GEF (\$4.1M - 2017-2021). It focuses on three areas: (i) forest code, border issue and capacity development of the forestry sector; (ii) Integrated forest management and forest management planning piloted in 12 Leskhozoes; and (iii) Development of information systems for forest inventories.
- World Bank project “*Pasture and Livestock Improvement Project*” (\$15M – 2015-2019) supporting community-based pasture management approach.
- IFAD funded project “*Livestock and markets development Programme IP*” (\$32M – 2013-2018) implemented by the Agency for Rural Investments Support (ARIS) and focusing on pasture management practices and planning, incorporating SLM principles in Jalal-Abad, Batken, and Osh provinces.

77. The project also joined the *Coordination and Consultative Council*, an entity let by SAEPF and bringing together donors, and national and international stakeholders implementing forest related projects. This body has been overseeing the piloting of institutional reform in the forest sector led by SAEPF in six Leskhozoes and testing different approaches to sustainable forest management involving local communities. The best practices will form the basis for a new forestry sector reform concept. The project has brought its experience in promoting HCVF, JFM and in restoring degraded forests and pastures.

78. In conclusion, the assessment conducted for this evaluation reveals that key stakeholders are well engaged in implementing the project and good coordination mechanisms are in place to collaborate among related projects, including the exchange of best practices and lessons learned. The participative and collaborative approach used by the project implementation team is conducive for this good engagement and will certainly be contributing to the sustainability of project achievements over the long term.

### 3.3.3. Work Planning

79. Project Annual Work Plans (AWPs) were produced every year from 2017. These AWPs were developed following UNDP project management guidelines, including the calendar year cycle (January to December for

<sup>6</sup> BIOFIN is a global partnership launched by UNDP at CBD-COP-11 in October 2012 seeking to address the biodiversity finance challenge in a comprehensive manner – to define biodiversity finance needs and gaps with greater precision through detailed national-level assessments, to determine challenges and opportunities for resource mobilization, and to build a stronger case for increased biodiversity investment – with a particular focus on the needs and transformational opportunities at the national level. Biodiversity investment in this context is seen as a key element in promoting sustainable development and the eradication of poverty.

each year). Once finalized, these AWP were reviewed and endorsed by the PB and approved by UNDP. The budgets for these AWP are systematically recorded in the UNDP Atlas system. These AWP details the list of main activities to be conducted during the coming year following the structure of the log frame (objective, outcomes, and outputs) of the project. For each activity, they include a tentative schedule (per month) when each activity will be implemented and a corresponding budget from the GEF grant and UNDP TRAC when appropriate.

80. Based on the information collected, the Evaluator compared the budgeted annual work plans with the actual annual disbursements, the results are presented in the table below:

**Table 7: Annual Work Plans versus Actual Expenditures (GEF Grant)**

Years	AWP Budgets	Actual Expenditures	% Spent
2017	477,011	221,989	47%
2018	1,193,889	723,946	62%
2019	1,328,608	N/A	N/A

Sources: Project AWP and UNDP-Atlas CDR Reports

81. Numbers presented in the table above reveal that work planning has not been too efficient since the start of the project in 2017. Actual expenditures have been well under budget for the year 2017 (only 47% was expended) and under budget for 2018 representing 61% of the approved AWP-2018 budget. In 2019, as of end of June, only 28% of the approved AWP-2019 has been expended versus 50% of the time (6 months). With a remaining budget this year of USD 952,762 for the next 6 months, it is doubtful that the figure for the actual expenditures will meet the approved budget.

82. As the project is now past its mid-point and benefiting from the budgeting experience for the first three years, it is expected that the work planning will continue to be more efficient over the remaining years. However, when considering the remaining GEF budget to be expended between July 2019 and December 2021, the yearly average of project expenditures would need to significantly increase for the entire GEF grant to be expended by December 2021. A quick calculation of the remaining GEF grant as of end of June 2019 indicates that the expenditures during the remaining 30 months of implementation should be about USD 1,067,000 per year; a significant increase over the previous years (a 47% increase over 2018). The review conducted for this MTR indicates that it is unlikely that this remaining budget will be spent by December 2021 (see also Section 3.3.4 below).

83. In the meantime, the assessment of the project management approach conducted for this evaluation reveals that the implementation of project activities has a lot of “moving parts”, rendering the management and administration a complex affair. It was noted that the project implementation team has been using a variety of management tools to get the job done: adaptive management, flexibility, consensus building, innovation, transparency, partnerships, collaborative management, etc. Moreover, the team has been using all available “channels” to deliver activities and reach expected results.

84. However, within this context and considering that the project implementation modality is DIM, few stakeholders mentioned the lengthy UNDP procurement process and the need for more transparency/participation of key stakeholders in procuring project goods and services.

### **3.3.4. Finance and Co-finance**

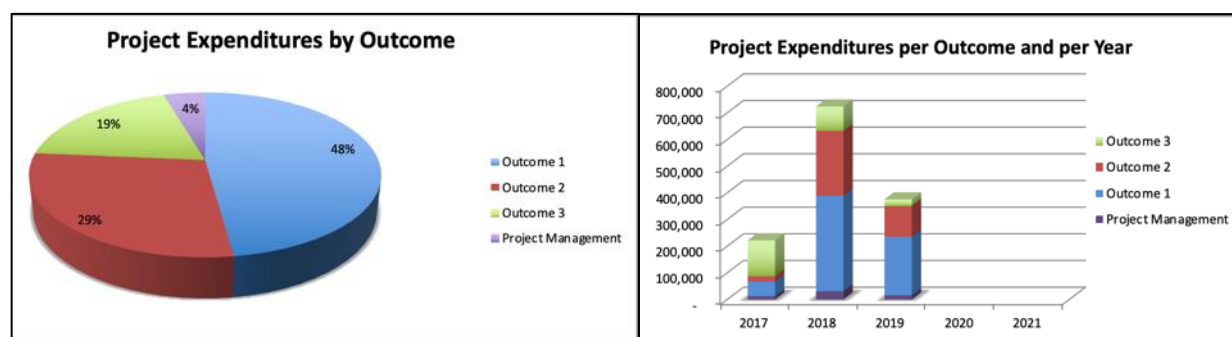
85. As discuss in Section 3.3.1, the implementation modality of the project to allocate, administer and report on project resources is the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM); that is UNDP took on the role of Implementing Partner. It has the technical and administrative capacity to assume the responsibility for mobilizing and applying effectively the required inputs in order to reach the expected outputs of the project. UNDP assumes the overall management responsibility and accountability for the implementation of the project. It follows all policies and procedures established for its own operations.

86. At the time of this evaluation, the review of financial records as recorded in the UNDP Atlas system indicates that the actual expenditures allocated against the GEF project grant for the years 2017 to June 2019 represent about 33% (USD 1,321,781) of the approved total grant of USD 3,988,575 versus an elapsed time of 50% (30 months out of 60). The breakdown of project expenditures by outcome and by year is presented in the table below.

**Table 8: UNDP-GEF Project Funds Disbursement Status (in USD)**

Component	Budget (USD)	2017	2018	2019 <sup>7</sup>	Total (USD)	Total/ Budget
Outcome 1	1,600,000	54,975	357,691	219,616	632,282	40%
Outcome 2	1,608,576	19,414	243,107	114,876	377,397	24%
Outcome 3	590,068	134,970	91,656	25,545	252,170	43%
Project Management	189,931	12,631	31,492	15,810	59,932	32%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,988,575</b>	<b>221,989</b>	<b>723,946</b>	<b>375,846</b>	<b>1,321,781</b>	<b>33%</b>

Sources: UNDP Atlas Financial Reports (CDRs) and information collected from the Project Team.



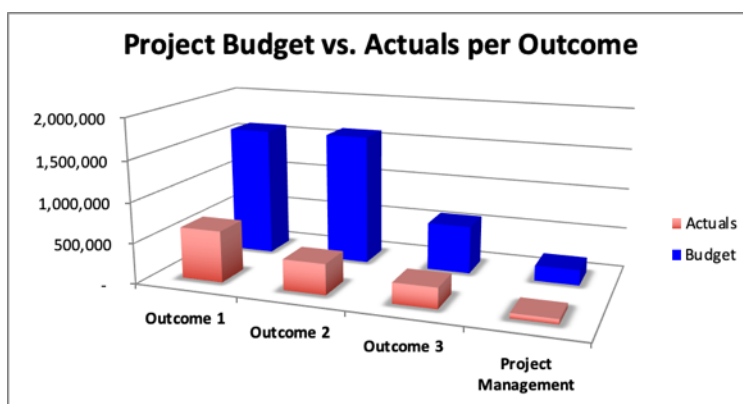
87. As discussed in section 3.3.3, these financial figures indicate a relatively low disbursement rate by the project. With a project starting date of January 2017, the project expended USD 1,321,781 to the end of June 2019 that is 33% of the GEF grant versus 50% of the project timeline (30 months out of 60 months). As of July 1, 2019, the remaining budget from the GEF grant is USD 2,666,794 (67%). When considering the timeline left for implementing the project (30 months), it is doubtful that the entire budget will be expended by December 2021. Taking as a benchmark the average monthly disbursement of the first 30 months of USD 44,059, the average monthly disbursement for the remaining period of 30 months needs to be USD 88,893; that is doubling the monthly expenditures over the remaining period of 30 months. It is not impossible to achieve but it requires a drastic change in managing the project with a significant increase of project activities and disbursements to reach this average.

88. In the meantime, the project is moving ahead with its implementation plan. Based on the financial assessment of the project conducted for this MTR, including discussions with the project implementation team, it is anticipated that the GEF grant may not be totally expended by December 2021. In the case this situation becomes a reality, the Evaluator recommends a no-cost time extension to consolidate project achievements.

89. The review of project expenditures against budgets per outcome reveals an unequal level of spending. The table above and the diagram indicate that almost 40% and 43% of the budgets for respectively outcome 1 (improving the conservation and management of KBAs) and 3 (strengthening Snow Leopard conservation) have been expended to June 2019 but only 24% has been expended for outcome 2 (improving ecosystem resilience). Finally, 32% has been spent for managing the project, which represents about 4.5% of the

<sup>7</sup> Figures for 2019 at from January to June 2019.

expenditures to date. This ratio is slightly lower than the 4.8% budgeted for project management at the outset of the project. This disbursement profile is in line with the analysis conducted in section 3.2.1. Progress under outcome 2 has been slower due mostly to the dependence of the officialization of the HCVF concept and that the micro-grant scheme has not started yet.



### Co-financing

90. Co-financing commitments at the outset of the project totaled the amount of USD 24,519,183 (*see table below*), which represented about 86% of the total amount of the financial resources committed in the project document of USD 28,507,758 (GEF grant + co-financing) for the implementation of the project. The pledged amounts listed in the table below were supported by co-financing letters.

**Table 9: Co-financing Status**

Partner	Type of Co-financing	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Total Committed (USD)
SAEPF	Grant	9,459,457	1,427,666	2,912,877	13,800,000
SAEPF	In-kind	250,000	250,000	-	500,000
UNDP TRAC	Cash	100,000	-	-	100,000
UNDP Other Grants	Parallel	225,000	4,752,383	450,000	5,427,383
Fund for Nature Protection and Forestry Development		200,000	-	-	200,000
State Inspectorate for Environmental and Technical Safety	In-kind	121,600	121,600	121,600	364,800
Toktogul District Government	Grant	-	3,100,000	-	3,100,000
Toguz-Toro District Government	Grant	-	100,000	-	100,000
GIZ	Parallel	-	627,000	-	627,000
Panthera	In-kind	-	-	300,000	300,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL (USD)</b>		<b>10,356,057</b>	<b>10,378,649</b>	<b>3,784,477</b>	<b>24,519,183</b>

Source: Project Document

91. A large amount of this co-financing (58%) was to come from the SAEPPF, the Responsible Partner, as both in-kind and through grants. UNDP was to provide less than 1% as cash (TRAC: USD 100,000) and an additional parallel financing of USD 5,427,383 (22%). Another large commitment was from the local Districts (Toktogul and Toguz-Toro) with a total co-financing contribution of 13% through grants. The rest was to come from other national entities as well as from GIZ.

92. At the time of the MTR, limited reporting has been made on co-financing contributions. It only includes a correspondence from the SAEPPF for mostly the period 2018-2019. The total co-financed amount reported by the government is approximately USD 870,000 which would be only 3.5% of the total committed at the outset of the project. In the case of UNDP, the TRAC amount logged in the Atlas system is USD 19,800 or about 20% of their commitment under TRAC. However, these figures represent only a partial reporting. It is recommended that the project implementation team reviews these commitments and request yearly the values co-financed by partners of the project.

93. In the meantime, the Evaluator confirmed that partners have contributed critical resources to the implementation of this project. As discussed in section 3.1.1, 3.3.1 and 3.3.2, the project benefits from a strong

partnership with key stakeholders including SAEPF, the Responsible Partner of the project, and other national and local government entities, as well as NGOs and Development Partners.

### 3.3.5. Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

94. A M&E plan was developed during the formulation of the project – including sex disaggregated data and indicators - in accordance with standard UNDP and GEF procedures. A budget of USD 80,000 was allocated to M&E, representing a mere 2% of the GEF grant. No changes were made during the inception phase. The M&E plan was reviewed during the inception phase and no changes were made to the plan. A summary of the operating modalities of the M&E plan are as follows:

- *Performance indicators:* A set of 21 indicators with their respective baselines and targets at the end of the project were identified and documented in the *Strategic Results Framework*.
- *Inception workshop:* It was conducted on December 7, 2017 in Bishkek with an attendance of 87 people. The project strategy was explained in detail, as well as the *Strategic Results Framework*. The Evaluator noted that at this workshop, presentations from other projects were facilitated focusing on lessons learned and best practices. It included presentation of the UNDP-GEF project “*Improving the Coverage and Management of Protected Areas in the Central Tien Shan*”, the BIOFIN project implemented by UNDP, the FAO-GEF project “*Sustainable Management of Mountain Forests and Land Resources in the Context of Climate Change*”, and the WB-GEF project “*Integrated Management of Forest Ecosystems in the Kyrgyz Republic*”. Discussions were also facilitated on roles and responsibilities of the Implementing Agency, other partners/stakeholders and the Project Team and the first-year work plan was reviewed. No changes were made to the project strategy as documented in the project document; An inception report documented the inception phase including the minutes of the Inception Workshop.
- *Quarterly Progress Reports:* Quarterly progress were planned to monitor the progress and record it in the UNDP Enhanced Results Based Management Platform. Risks are also reviewed quarterly and updated in the Atlas system when needed.
- *Annual Project Review/Project Implementation Review (APR/PIR):* These annual progress reports, combining both UNDP and GEF annual reporting requirements, are submitted by the Project Coordinator to the PB, using the UNDP standards for project progress reporting, including a summary of results achieved against the overall targets identified in the project document. They are following the GEF annual cycle of July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- *Periodic Monitoring through Site Visits:* UNDP Country Office and the UNDP-GEF RSC have been conducting visits to project sites to assess firsthand project progress. Field Visit Reports were prepared and circulated to the Project Team.
- *External mid-term and final evaluations:* The mid-term evaluation (MTR) is underway (this report); a final evaluation will take place three months prior to the final PB meeting and will follow UNDP and GEF evaluation guidelines. The GEF Focal Area Tracking Tool was completed during the mid-term evaluation cycle and will be updated during the final evaluation.
- *Project Terminal Report:* This comprehensive report will summarize the results achieved (objectives, outcomes, outputs), lessons learned, problems met and areas where results may not have been achieved. It will also lay out recommendations for any further steps that may need to be taken to ensure sustainability and replicability of project’s results.
- *Learning and Knowledge Sharing:* Results from the project are to be disseminated within and beyond the project intervention zone through existing information sharing networks and forums. The project is due to identify and participate, as relevant and appropriate, in scientific, policy-based and/or any other networks, which may be of benefit to project implementation through lessons learned. The project is to identify, analyze, and share lessons learned that might be beneficial in the design and implementation of similar future projects. A two-way flow of information between this project and other projects with a similar focus is also encouraged.
- *Communications and visibility requirements:* Full compliance is required with UNDP’s Branding Guidelines and the GEF’s Communication and Visibility Guidelines, including the use of the UNDP and GEF logos. For other agencies and project partners that provide support through co-financing, their branding policies and requirements should be similarly applied.
- *Audits:* Audits should be conducted in accordance with UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules and applicable audit policies on UNDP projects.

95. The set of indicators presented in the *Strategic Results Framework* was reviewed during this review. It includes a set of 21 indicators – each one with a baseline and a target by the end of the project - to monitor the performance of the project at the objective and outcome level. The list of indicators and targets is presented in the table below:

**Table 10:** List of Performance Indicators

Project Outcomes	Indicators	Targets
<b>Project Objective:</b> To promote a landscape approach to protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan	1. Trend in population levels of globally significant fauna (Red List, ecosystem indicator or keystone species) in Jalal-Abad province: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snow leopard (<i>Panthera uncia</i>)</li> <li>• Ibex (<i>Capra sibirica</i>)</li> <li>• Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>)</li> <li>• Tian Shan white clawed bear (<i>Ursus arctos isabellinus</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population trend is at least stable over a rolling five-year period. Number of individuals and annual rate of change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snow leopard (<i>Panthera uncia</i>): 49; &gt;0%</li> <li>• Ibex (<i>Capra sibirica</i>): 4839; &gt;3%</li> <li>• Golden eagle (<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>): 40; &gt;1%</li> <li>• Tian Shan white clawed bear (<i>Ursus arctos isabellinus</i>): 256; &gt;5%</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	2. Status of globally significant flora in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semenov's fir (<i>Abies Semenovii</i>)</li> <li>• Juniper (<i>Juniperus sp.</i>)</li> <li>• Relict spruce (<i>Picea schrenkiana</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Index of area and forest quality of globally significant flora in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semenov's fir (<i>Abies Semenovii</i>) – Total = 4,281.8 ha: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ha - Category 1: 2,225.1</li> <li>◦ Ha – Category 2: 1,956.3</li> <li>◦ Ha – Category 3: 100.4</li> <li>◦ Ha – Category 4: 0</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Juniper (<i>Juniperus sp.</i>) – Total = 7,171.8 ha: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ha - Category 1: 1289.1</li> <li>◦ Ha – Category 2: 4,701.7</li> <li>◦ Ha – Category 3: 1,181.0</li> <li>◦ Ha – Category 4: 0</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Relict spruce (<i>Picea schrenkiana</i>) – Total = 4,202.6 ha: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ha - Category 1: 1,745.7</li> <li>◦ Ha – Category 2: 2,456.9</li> <li>◦ Ha – Category 3: 0</li> <li>◦ Ha – Category 4: 0</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	3. Area of degraded pastureland in four target A/As in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cholpon-Ata</li> <li>• Kyzyl-Ozgorush</li> <li>• Kok-Irim</li> <li>• Atai</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 ha (decrease of 65,361 ha)</li> </ul>
	4. Landscape area under directly improved conservation management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of Jalal-Abad province for which improved biodiversity, forest, and land management measures will be directly influenced by project results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 472,635 ha (SFM in 34,382 ha of forest (the forested area under management by Toktogul and Toguz-Toro leskhozoes), restoration of degraded forest in 4,886 ha, implementation of SLM in 147,268 ha of pasturelands (65,361 ha of which is degraded pasturelands). In addition, 286,099 ha of protected areas, of which 87,322 ha are the two new PAs in the primary target districts)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Project Outcomes	Indicators	Targets
	5. Landscape area under indirectly improved conservation management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of Jalal-Abad province for which improved biodiversity, forest, and land management measures will be indirectly influenced by project results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>944,317 ha (Area of two target districts, less the area of the PAs (87,322 ha), SFM land (34,382 ha), afforested area (4,886 ha), and SLM land (147,268 ha) covered in these districts under direct coverage above)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	6. Population of Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts that have derived indirect livelihood benefits from project results (disaggregated by gender)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toktogul District communities of Cholpon-Ata and Kyzyl-Ozgorush <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8,979 women</li> <li>9,328 men</li> </ul> </li> <li>Toguz-Toro District communities of Kok-Irim and Atai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,723 women</li> <li>2,909 men</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 1 - Conservation and sustainable management of Key Biodiversity Areas within landscape</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Output 1.1:</b> Expanded operational SPNA network in the Western Tian Shan region through support to operationalize the two new State Nature Parks of Alatai and Kan-Achuu</li> <li><b>Output 1.2:</b> Upgraded status of HCVF, and sustainable forest management involving local communities</li> <li><b>Output 1.3:</b> Enhanced management and conservation capacities of Western Tian Shan PAs in Jalal-Abad Province, and strengthened HCVF management</li> <li><b>Output 1.4:</b> Strengthened participatory patrolling, enforcement and surveillance systems of new and existing PAs through the Local PA Management Board and joint patrol groups to enforce anti-poaching</li> </ul>	7. Management effectiveness of key alpine protected areas in Jalal-Abad province covering 286,099 ha (METT score)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>METT Score: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alatai NP (new PA): &gt;50</li> <li>Kan-Achuu NP (new PA): &gt;50</li> <li>Sary-Chelek SNR: &gt;65</li> <li>Padysh-Ata SNR: &gt;50</li> <li>Besh Aral SNR: &gt;50</li> <li>Saimaluu-Tash SNP: &gt;40</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	8. Status of HCVF management approach legal and regulatory framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HCVF management approach has legal basis, and relevant regulations are produced</li> </ul>
	9. Existence of HCVF management measures in FMPs and level of implementation in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation is initiated (defined as incorporation of HCVF management practices in approved FMPs) in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts</li> <li>4/6 on GEF TT scale: "Step 4: The regulations are under implementation"</li> </ul>
	10. Average number of hectares covered per week by anti-poaching patrols (PA rangers, forest rangers, and game wardens) in Alatai SNP (56,826 ha) and Kan-Achuu SNP (30,497 ha), Toktogul (104,860 ha) and Toguz-Toro (57,356 ha) leskhoz territories, and Chychkan Zoological (game) reserve (65,551) territories in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts, out of the 315,090 ha total SNP, leskhoz, and game reserve)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1000 hectares patrolled per week in 2021 (baseline * four times the number of anti-poaching ranger team patrols for each location. Assessed as the minimum coverage necessary to ensure effective management, regulatory monitoring, and deterrence of illegal activities)</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 2 – Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in Western Tian Shan are enhanced by regulating land and forest use in buffer zones and corridors and support to sustainable livelihoods.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Output 2.1:</b> Identified and designated buffer zones for</li> </ul>	11. Area of sustainably managed forest in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts (broken down by HCVF in PAs, HCVF in Leskhoz, and all other forest)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;40,000 ha</li> </ul>
	12. Area of forest resources restored in the landscape (broken down by reforested/afforested area, vs. area under natural regeneration support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4,886 ha (500 ha reforestation/afforestation, 4,500 ha supported for natural regeneration)</li> </ul>

Project Outcomes	Indicators	Targets
<p>new SPNAs and wildlife corridors between relevant SPNAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Output 2.2:</b> Territorial development plans of Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts and communities aligned with biodiversity conservation, SFM and SLM objectives</li> <li>• <b>Output 2.3:</b> Degraded rangelands important both for livelihoods and wildlife, including snow leopard prey species in the target districts, rehabilitated through improved local pasture management plans.</li> <li>• <b>Output 2.4:</b> Restoration of degraded forests important for wildlife, including snow leopard prey, and livelihoods of local communities</li> <li>• <b>Output 2.5:</b> Alternative livelihoods program for local communities designed jointly with the local micro-crediting institutions, and launched to support target communities</li> </ul>	13. Lifetime indirect GHG emissions avoided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,979,548 tons CO2 equivalent</li> </ul>
	14. Implementation of e-Pasture Management System (as an SLM mechanism supporting implementation of the Pastures Law) in Toguz-Toro and Toktogul districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• e-Pasture Management System implemented by 4 Pasture Management Committees (PMCs) in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts</li> </ul>
	15. Hectares of alpine grassland and forest ecosystems under improved conservation management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 186,536 ha - SFM in 34,382 ha of HC VF, restore degraded forest in 4,886 ha, and implement SLM in 147,268 ha of pasturelands</li> </ul>
	16. Hectares of pastureland under SLM in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 147,268 ha</li> </ul>
	17. Number of people whose livelihoods are affected by land degradation in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts (with a population number index value fixed set at 100 for 2016 (in case of total population increases or decreases))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women: &lt;11,702</li> <li>• Men: &lt;12,237</li> <li>• Total: &lt;23,939</li> <li>• Index: &lt;100% of total population</li> <li>• Toktogul District</li> <li>• Cholpon-Ata Village <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,562 women</li> <li>• 3,802 men</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Kyzyl-Ozgorush Village <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5,417 women</li> <li>• 5,526 men</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Toguz-Toro District</li> <li>• Kok-Irim Village <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,703 women</li> <li>• 1,782 men</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Atai village <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,020 women</li> <li>• 1,127 men</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	18. Herder/farmer income change based on benefits from microfinance/grant program for individuals participating in the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women: 10% increase</li> <li>• Men: 10% increase</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcome 3 - Strengthened national capacities for snow leopard conservation, promoting Kyrgyz regional and global cooperation, and setting the scene for up-scaling.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Output 3.1:</b> Law enforcement capacities of relevant stakeholders enhanced through trainings on wildlife protection aimed at identification and prosecution of wildlife crime</li> <li>• <b>Output 3.2:</b> Capacities for deployment of international standards for long-term monitoring of parameters critical for snow leopard conservation in national priority landscapes developed, based on</li> </ul>	19. Level of illegal wildlife trade activity, as indicated by number of snow leopard, snow leopard prey, and other illegal wildlife seizures at border crossings and at Manas international airport, as well as number of arrests related to wildlife trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual number of seizures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snow leopard: &lt;Baseline (at least one seizure assisted by specially trained dogs)</li> <li>• Snow leopard prey: &lt;Baseline (at least one seizure assisted by specially trained dogs)</li> <li>• Other illegal wildlife: &lt;Baseline (at least one seizure by specially trained dogs)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Number of arrests = &gt;baseline</li> <li>• &gt;50% of arrests result in prosecutions</li> </ul>
	20. Level of international cooperation and coordination with Kyrgyzstan border countries regarding illegal wildlife trade, biodiversity management in borderland protected areas, and snow leopard monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International agreement between Kyrgyzstan and at least one bordering country under implementation regarding at least one of the below issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperation on law enforcement at border points regarding illegal wildlife trade</li> <li>• Illegal hunting by border guards</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Project Outcomes	Indicators	Targets
international GSLEP monitoring framework.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data sharing on snow leopard monitoring</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Output 3.3:</b> Kyrgyzstan participation in the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programs supported, aimed at synergies and coordination of national, transboundary and regional level activities</li> <li>• <b>Output 3.4:</b> Implementation of Kyrgyzstan's NSSLIC supported in nationally identified priority landscapes provided, in alignment and coordination with GSLEP and other relevant initiatives</li> </ul>	21. Quality and coverage of snow leopard monitoring data in Kyrgyzstan as indicated by estimated accuracy and timeliness of national snow leopard population estimate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing of annual estimates with a 60% confidence level (the average confidence level among other snow leopard range states in GSLEP population estimate)</li> </ul>

Source: Project Document and PIRs

96. This set of 21 indicators and their respective targets did not change since the formulation of the project. These indicators have been used yearly to report progress made in the APRs/PIRs. The review of these indicators and their respective targets reveals that these indicators are mostly quantitative indicators, focusing much on targeted areas (hectares) or targeted audiences (number of women and men) such as “*Hectares of alpine grassland and forest ecosystems under improved conservation management*” or “*Number of people whose livelihoods are affected by land degradation in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts*”, and few of those indicators are quality-based indicators.

97. Quantitative indicators give a clear measure of things and are numerically comparable. They also provide an easy comparison of a project progress over time and are easy to monitor and do not require too much resources to collect data. However, quantitative indicators also do not depict the status of something in more qualitative terms. Degree of capacity developed are often better captured by qualitative indicators. For example, what is the increased capacity of targeted institutions to sustainably manage forests in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts ....? The answer to this question may not only be an area of over 40,000 ha of forests to be sustainably managed. It may not be measurable in strict quantitative terms, but it can be graded based on qualitative findings. In order to achieve this target, lots of capacities will need to be developed including the capacity to implement SFM measures, the capacity to incorporate HCVF approaches in forest management plans and the capacity of local communities to adopt these new measures and regulations. Having an adequate enabling environment for the implementation of HCVF is not enough; related organizations will need to improve their structures, mechanisms and procedures, and staff in these organizations will need to have the capacity to identify, plan, implement and monitor these new concepts. Measuring the degree to which these capacities are in place will be critical when assessing the sustainability of project achievements at the end of the project.

98. In the case of capacity development initiatives such as this project that is “*to promote a landscape approach to protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan*”, using quantitative and qualitative indicators would allow the project implementation team to better measure the change toward a landscape approach for biodiversity conservation. A mix of both types of indicators would be more suited for the measurement of the performance of this project offering quantity and quality information about project achievements.

99. Finally, as already discussed in section 3.1.2, the review of these indicators indicates a rather convoluted set of performance indicators. Some of these indicators are redundant and not specific enough, few are difficult to understand what they aim to measure, and most of them are too wordy. They could be SMARTs...er! The

8 SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound.

M&E framework is much focused on surface areas to be covered by the project (number of ha) and on the number of participants involved in project activities as opposed to focusing more on the development of new knowledge and on increasing the capacity of stakeholders/beneficiaries. Nevertheless, based on the review of the M&E framework of the project, this function is rated as *moderately satisfactory*. Despite the weakness of the set of indicators and their respective targets, the monitoring framework in place is workable and the project implementation team has been able to use this framework to annually report progress made by the project. As it stands at the time of this MTR, it is expected that the project will meet its targets by December 2021.

### **3.3.6. Reporting**

100. Management reports have been produced according to UNDP project management guidelines. They include AWP that when finalized are endorsed by the PB; quarterly progress reports; and annual APRs/PIRs. The Evaluator was able to collect the 2017, 2018 and 2019 AWP, and the APR/PIRs for 2018 and 2019, as well as the *Implementation and Monitoring State Quality Assurance Report* for 2017 and 2018. Overall, progress made by the project is being satisfactorily reported, following UNDP project progress reporting guidelines. The APRs/PIRs document the progress made against the project objective and outcomes on a yearly basis using the set of indicators reviewed in the previous section. These annual reports include also a review and update of the risks identified at the outset of the project and the steps taken to mitigate these risks when rated as critical.

101. The ratings given in APRs/PIRs were also reviewed as well as those in the *Implementation and Monitoring State Quality Assurance Reports*. The progress made against the overall development objective and outcomes has been rated as *Moderately Satisfactory* in both the 2018 and 2019 APR/PIR, and the same rating was given to the implementation progress in the 2018 report (no rating was given for this criterion in the 2019 report). Regarding the *Implementation and Monitoring State Quality Assurance Reports*, ratings are only given in the 2017 report. They include: Strategic: *Highly Satisfactory*; Relevant: *Satisfactory*; Social & Environmental Standards: *Exemplary*; Management & Monitoring: *Highly Satisfactory*; Efficient: *Exemplary*; Effective: *Satisfactory*; Sustainability & National Ownership: *Highly Satisfactory*. The Evaluator found that the ratings in the *Implementation and Monitoring State Quality Assurance Reports* were well justified. However, the ratings given in the APRs/PIRs are on the low side, particularly when considering the progress made so far (see Section 3.2.1).

### **3.3.7. Communications / Knowledge Management**

102. Communication is not “embedded” in the project strategy (*Strategic Results Framework*); i.e. it is not part of the expected results/deliverables. As a result, it is not part of the performance monitoring of the project; no indicators are tracking communication activities. However, it is part of the M&E plan whereby under learning and knowledge sharing “*results from the project are to be disseminated within and beyond the project intervention zone through existing information sharing networks and forums*”. The project is also due to identify and participate, as relevant and appropriate, in scientific, policy-based and/or any other networks, which may be of benefit to project implementation through lessons learned. As per the M&E plan, the project also needs to identify, analyze, and share lessons learned that might be beneficial in the design and implementation of similar future projects. A two-way flow of information between this project and other projects with a similar focus is also encouraged. However, the Evaluator noted that no budget was planned for this activity in the M&E plan.

103. Nevertheless, despite that communication and knowledge management is not part of the strategy of the project, the project implementation team has been excellent in producing information products to raise awareness of stakeholders and beneficiaries and overall to emphasize the visibility of the project and its objectives. As reported in the annual reports (APRs/PIRs), the project has released numerous communication products through several channels, including Youtube videos, newsletters, magazines, social media, websites including those from partners to the project, TV channels, photo book, brochures, etc. The project set up a Facebook pages for both new SNPs: Alatai and Kan-Achuu and keep them up-to-date. The list of communication products produced and released by the project and reported in the last 2019 PIR includes over 270 pieces of communication! Many of these communication pieces were released with information/knowledge related to particular events supported by the project such as training events, handovers of equipment to SNP Rangers, meetings/workshops, environmental days, etc.

104. Of particular value, the Evaluator noted the photo album “*Lord of the Mountains*”, a book with excellent pictures of Snow Leopards and text in both English and Russian languages providing information on history, nutrition base, habitat range of Snow Leopards. In addition to nice pictures of Snow Leopards, it is an excellent product to disseminate information on Snow Leopards. It also includes a book “*Western Tian Shan Geological Legacy*”, published in Russian and which describes the various geological formations in the Western Tian Shan region with a particular interest, and which could be attractions to develop eco-tourism. Finally, the project also supported the development of brochures of both new SNPs: Alatai and Kan-Achuu.

105. As a result of these communication products, the Evaluator confirms the good visibility of the project at national but also as regional and local levels where the demonstration sites are located. Through various communication channels, knowledge on biodiversity conservation, including Snow Leopard conservation, is being disseminated throughout Kyrgyzstan.

### 3.4. Sustainability

106. This section discusses how sustainable project achievements should be over the long-term. It includes a review of the management of risks and specific risks such as financial risk, socio-economic risks, institutional framework and governance risks, and environmental risks.

107. Project risks were identified at the formulation stage and documented in the project document; including the risk mitigation strategy for each identified risk. It is a list of 4 anticipated risks, which are presented in the table below as well as their respective mitigation measures. The project implementation team has been monitoring these risks. The overall risk rating in APRs/PIRs was *Low* in the 2018 report and *Moderate* in the 2019 report.

**Table 11:** List of Risks and Mitigation Measures Identified at the Formulation Phase

Project Risks	Rating	Mitigation Measures
1. State and municipal institutions responsible for the administration of protected areas, pastures and forests do not have adequate capacity to support, maintain and enforce working agreements with communities, pasture users' groups, forest users' groups living adjacent to SPNAs	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project will seek to significantly strengthen and expand the current capabilities of the key institutions,50 that are directly responsible for the planning and management of protected areas, natural habitats, pastures and forests across the snow leopard range in the Western Tian Shan region of Kyrgyzstan. More specifically, it will assist in development of a well-trained and properly equipped management, monitoring, enforcement, community liaison and pastoral and forest groups staff in the targeted SPNAs, Leskhozoes, local state administrations and self-governance bodies of the communities. UNDP PMU will iteratively develop an institutional sustainability plan to ensure that the different project investments in building the capacity of the targeted institutions are maintained (and scaled-up, if feasible and affordable) beyond the project. The project will also support the implementation of SPNA 'business planning" on income-generating opportunities (e.g. income from tourist fees, pasture tax, forest use and leasing fees, income from fines, etc.) to further augment the current budgets of the responsible institutions.</li> </ul>
2. Low levels of compliance with environmental legislation, and a reluctance to adopt more sustainable natural resource use practices, leads to the further degradation of, and loss of productivity in, snow leopard and prey habitats.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project will seek for <u>compliance</u> with environment enabling frames to expand the area of biodiversity and snow leopard and prey protection, as well as to improve the monitoring and enforcement capabilities across the snow leopard range in the Western Tian Shan. The project will specifically: support operationalization of two targeted PA; upgrading HCVF and SFM (Output 1.1., and 1.2 enabling framework); enhance PA staff capacities on PA and HCVF effective management (Output 1.3.); and implementation of a joint patrol system in (Output 1.4); as well as strengthen wildlife monitoring and enforcement capacities (knowledge, training, skills, equipment and staff) in the responsible state agencies (Output 3.2); build the capacity of border and customs officials to improve the detection of illegal wildlife trade (Output 3.1); and facilitate the establishment of a coordination mechanism of different state institutions in combatting wildlife crime (Output 3.1-3.2). To address <u>reluctance</u>, the project will seek to incentivize an incremental shift to more sustainable land use (focused on grazing and forest use) practices. The project will specifically: align target districts' and communities' development plans with biodiversity conservation, SLM and SFM provisions (Output 2.2.); facilitate the economic beneficiation of communities living around target parks</li> </ul>

Project Risks	Rating	Mitigation Measures
		<p>in return for a reduction in illegal activities by rehabilitating degraded pastures and restoration of degraded forests promoting participatory SLM and SFM provisions (Output 2.3 and 2.4); and conduct an ecosystem services valuation of target PAs (Output 1.1); as well as provide small grants to assist rural communities and local governments to shift to environmentally sustainable livelihoods (Output 2.5).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additionally, to address the risk, the project will seek to improve the <u>awareness</u> of rural communities living in the snow leopard range on the importance of conserving snow leopard, their prey and their habitats. The project will specifically: support new PAs to develop and implement communication strategy (Output 1.1); strengthen the knowledge and awareness of sustainable pasture management in the Pasture Management Committees (Output 2.3); strengthen the knowledge and awareness of sustainable forest management in JFM Boards of the targeted Leskhozoes (Output 1.2);</li> </ul>
3. Low levels of coordination and cooperation between public institutions, tenure holders, rights holders, landowners, NGOs/CBOs and natural resources users leads to conflicts over any changes in use rights in SPNAs and high-altitude pastures and forests	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project is building on the lessons learnt from the previous UNDP experience on cooperation with communities and local and regional authorities in the implementation of project interventions on democratic governance, poverty reduction, disaster risks reduction and environment. It suggests that a high level of engagement and local ownership among local stakeholders will be maintained in this project, with careful attention given to stakeholder consultation, participation and conflict resolution. The project will work closely with the administration of the targeted SPNAs, Leskhozoes, local state administrations, local self-governance bodies, Pasture Management Committees, JFM Boards and other CBOs in ensuring the effective involvement of all affected stakeholders in the implementation of project activities. The project will specifically work through (and assist in establishing) the coordinating structures of Park Public Councils, Pasture Committees and JFM Boards as an institutional mechanism to improve the communication, collaboration and cooperation between tenure holders, rights holders, natural resource users and the relevant state, regional and local administrations. The project will also strengthen the knowledge and skills of protected area staff, pasture and forest users and managers in order to facilitate a more collaborative approach in the planning, implementation and enforcement of sustainable forest and pasture management practices. A stakeholder participation plan will be prepared as the project is further developed.</li> </ul>
4. The increasing aridization of mountainous habitats, as a result of the adverse effects of climate change, leads to more intensive and extensive grazing pressures on pastures, and potentially leading to forest vertical boundaries shift and species change as well as the local extirpation of snow leopard and medium-sized prey.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effects of climate change are likely to exacerbate the effects of the existing threats to snow leopard, their prey and their habitats. They are however not likely (under current climate change scenarios) to result in the emergence of new, potentially catastrophic threats. The project has thus been developed to improve the capacity of the country to proactively and more effectively address the current threats in anticipation of a future increase in the extent and intensity of the threats as a result of changing climate.</li> <li>• Snow leopards and their prey have large home ranges and should – assuming safe access to available habitats - be able to move in response to the projected effects and impacts of climate-change. The project has thus adopted a landscape-scale approach, with a strong emphasis on maintaining viable and secure movement corridors between formal protected areas. However, the project will contribute to implementation of the sectoral adaptation program adopted by SAEPP according to the Governmental Climate Change Adaptation Priorities. A study on the impact of climate change on the key species of the Western Tian Shan biodiversity will be conducted (Output 1.3) with the involvement of PAs, Leskhozoes, scientists, researchers in more rigorously monitoring the effects of climate change, especially on snow leopard and prey and collaborating in regional initiatives to develop strategies to mitigate and manage these effects.</li> </ul>

Source: Project Document and PIRs.

108. The project team has been monitoring these risks and reporting any critical risks in the annual APRs/PIRs reports. Risks are to be reported as critical when the impact and probability are high. No risks have been critical in the 2018 report. However, an additional risk was reported in the 2019 report as critical, which was not in the list of risks identified at the outset of the project. This is an organizational risk stated as “*Frequent changes in the management of parks, as well as heads of local district administrations affect the*

*work of the project. The project team has to re-explain the focus, goals and objectives of the project. The head of the district administration was replaced in Toktogul district, in Toguz-Toro district there is a second head of administration, also the director of Kan - Achuu SNP was replaced. In principle, such instability does not create a big threat to project implementation, since at the central level, arrangements remain within the project, but it affects the time frame for the implementation of project components, and the time spent by the project team for additional meetings with the new management”.*

109. Nevertheless, the review of these risks reveals that there are adequate, covering most aspects of the project where issues can arise. They include two important risks of insufficient capacity development and practical know-how within state institutions and local authorities by the end of the project to allow sustainability of project achievements; and of implementing legislative changes in a timely manner that are required to develop an adequate enabling environment for the promotion of these new landscape approaches. However, when considering the nature of this type of project, one additional risk may arise that is a change in political support for promoting new landscape approaches to biodiversity conservation and integrating these new approaches within the environmental sector. It is recommended to add this risk to the risk log of the project and to monitor/report on them yearly.

110. In the meantime, despite these risks, the Evaluator found that the project is progressing well and that through adaptive management, these risks are constantly mitigated; hence decreasing the chance that these risks would materialize. The project enjoys strong partnerships with government and non-government entities as well as local communities and other donor funded projects, which also contribute to mitigating most of these risks.

#### **3.4.1. Financial risk to Sustainability**

111. When reviewing the sustainability of project achievements, financial risk is an area where some questions related to the long-term sustainability of project achievements need some attention. The project has been supporting the establishment of two new SNPs, including the procurement of equipment for Rangers to facilitate their fieldwork and better monitor and surveil fauna and flora within these new SNPs. The project also supported the strengthening of patrol groups to enforce anti-poaching, including the establishment of local Freelance Rangers groups. This support accompanied by new methods and procedures has been optimal for the establishment of these new SNPs. However, once the project will end, financial resources will still be needed to maintain the equipment and at times to replace it, as well as the need for the government to continue to support these two new SNPs. As it stands currently, the government funding to these two new SNPs is much lower than funding provided to other similar SNPs in Kyrgyzstan.

112. Nevertheless, as discussed in other sections of this report, this review confirms the government's commitment to promote better approaches to biodiversity conservation. It is a priority for the government and so far, it is committed to the change process in this area. Conserving biodiversity is an important sector for Kyrgyzstan, particularly for the development of eco-tourism; it is expected that the government will continue to implement this priority and support it with the necessary financial resources, including resources to scale-up project achievements to other parts of Kyrgyzstan. It is also worth mentioning that the BIOFIN project implemented by UNDP is also focusing on financing biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan. It supported an *Environmental Finance Policy and Institutional Review*, as well as an expense review in the environmental area. Based on these findings, the BIOFIN project proposed a set of 11 solutions to the government to finance biodiversity conservation and in close collaboration with the government, some of these solutions are being selected and reviewed before being implemented.

#### **3.4.2. Socio-economic risk to Sustainability**

113. The review indicates that there is no socio-economic risk to sustainability. In the worst-case scenario, if the project has very limited impact, it should not affect negatively the project beneficiaries and the “business as usual” scenario would continue. Nevertheless, the project is progressing well. It is expected that the micro-grant scheme implemented in collaboration with local micro-credit institutions to support biodiversity friendly livelihoods should have a positive socio-economic impact on the livelihood of local communities in the project areas. Despite that the strategy of this approach is not necessarily to increase income from alternative sources, but to demonstrate, pilot and implement livelihood practices that are biodiversity friendly and support

SFM/SLM approaches, it should nevertheless have positive socio-economic impacts on local livelihoods.

### **3.4.3. Institutional framework and governance risk to Sustainability**

114. The review did not find any institutional and governance risks to the sustainability of project outcomes. As discussed previously in this report, the project is a direct response to the government agenda to strengthen its approach for biodiversity conservation, including the management of its protected area network. The project is “rooted” in national priorities, including its NBSAP 2014-2020. The project has been supporting capacity development activities to strengthen institutions dealing with the management of biodiversity in Kyrgyzstan, including strengthening the legislation and the regulatory framework in this area. Training has been provided on several topics related to biodiversity conservation. The project is supporting the implementation of new concepts for biodiversity conservation focusing on KBA, ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity, livelihood of local communities, and Snow Leopard conservation. It is anticipated that the government will continue to implement these new measures in the foreseeable future. Project achievements are already partially institutionalized; they should be sustained in the medium-term and used as demonstrations to be replicated throughout Kyrgyzstan. Overall, once the project will be completed, Kyrgyzstan should be better equipped for managing/conserving its biodiversity.

### **3.4.4. Environmental risk to Sustainability**

115. The review did not find any environmental risks to the sustainability of project outcomes. The project supports the implementation of measures to improve biodiversity conservation, including the development of capacities of national, and sub-national stakeholders to implement these measures. Ultimately, the achievements of the project that is *to promote a landscape approach to protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan*, should have a medium and long-term positive environmental impact over the natural resources in the project area. The implementation of new biodiversity conservation measures as well as protection measures for land and forests, should render the management of these ecosystems more sustainable over the long-term.

## **4. Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned**

### **4.1. Conclusions**

#### ***Project Strategy***

#### **a) The project is relevant for Kyrgyzstan.**

116. The WTS project is well aligned with national strategies and programmes as well as the UNDP and GEF-6 focal areas strategies. It is a direct response to national priorities by: (i) preventing the further fragmentation of key biodiversity landscapes and degradation of forest and land resources in Kyrgyzstan that provide critical ecosystem services; (ii) ensuring habitat connectivity across the Western Tian Shan landscape for key species, including snow leopard and prey; (iii) improving the conservation status, and sustainability of pasture and forest use in mountain ecosystems; (iv) implementing snow leopard and prey monitoring and conservation measures, and reduction of direct threats, in the Western Tian Shan and in other Kyrgyzstan priority snow leopard conservation landscapes. The project focuses on four strategic areas: biodiversity conservation in protected areas; ecological integrity of forests in WTS; sustainable pasturelands management in key biodiversity areas of WTS; and national scientific monitoring and law enforcement capacities for snow leopard conservation.

#### **b) An ambitious project with a broad scope and many activities to be implemented.**

117. It is an ambitious project with the introduction of several new biodiversity conservation and management concepts for Kyrgyzstan, including the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF), Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and SFM certification, Sustainable Land Management (SLM), Joint Forest Management (JFM), new management tools for State National Parks, Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), “green” micro-grant scheme, and National Strategy on Snow Leopard Conservation. These new concepts are all valid concepts to be introduced in Kyrgyzstan and



they are part of a landscape approach for managing/conserving biodiversity. However, the implementation of these concepts implies the need to develop numerous capacities including institutional capacities, individual capacities and the need to have an adequate enabling environment (policy and legislative frameworks) for all these concepts to be mainstreamed and sustained over the long-term. It has resulted in an extended list of activities planned to be implemented over the lifetime of the project.

### ***Progress Towards Results***

#### **c) The progress made by the project to date is satisfactory.**

118. The implementation adheres to the project strategy detailed in the project document. Overall, the project has made good progress so far and it has 30 more months of implementation. Outcome 1 & 3 are progressing well. Progress under outcome 2 is slower due mostly to the fact that the HCVF concept has not been officialized yet preventing forestry activities to be implemented and that the micro-grant scheme as not started yet. Progress highlights under each outcome include:

- Under Outcome 1 the project has introduced the METT methodology and a guide to conduct METT assessment, which was officialized by a SAEPF Order. METT scores have been established for all PAs in WTS. The project procured critical equipment to Rangers to better monitor and surveil fauna and flora in the two new SNPs as well as equipment to facilitate their fieldwork, including riding horses and camping equipment. The project has been introducing the HVCF concept in the forestry sector and a methodology to apply this concept to forests in Kyrgyzstan should be approved later in 2019. Finally, the project has also contributed to strengthen the patrolling and surveilling capacity of PAs in WTS; particularly strengthening patrol groups to enforce anti-poaching, including the creation of local groups of Freelance Rangers.
- Under Outcome 2 some plantations (including fencing) took place to restore some forest resources. The project supports the revision/improvement of the existing electronic pasture management system as well as the use of this revised e-Pasture Management System by herders/farmers. It has also contributed to the restoration of degraded pastures. The project has also been supporting the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation in local development planning in the Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts. Finally, a micro-grant scheme is being developed to provide small “green” grants to herders and farmers, in order to improve livelihoods of local communities. A first tranche of USD 100k should be deployed in the coming year.
- Under Outcome 3 the project as so far procured the Dog Service staff at the Manas (Bishkek) airport with uniforms and it is in the process of procuring an open-air cage for 4 dogs for the service to improve the control of illegal wildlife trade at the airport. The project is also seeking to support the training of dogs to combat poaching. Regarding the conservation of Snow Leopard, the project has been supporting national stakeholders, including the GSLEP Secretariat, to participate in consultation meetings with Central Asian countries for the development of a Memorandum of Cooperation on the Conservation of the Snow Leopard and its habitat. The project also supports the development of a Snow Leopard Monitoring database and a monitoring methodology to monitor the Snow Leopard population. It has procured 50 camera traps to strengthen the equipment necessary for wildlife monitoring; particularly Snow Leopard. Finally, a series of information products were developed for the International Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Forum (Bishkek, August 2017) and are still much used by the project in various fora to raise awareness about wildlife conservation, particularly Snow Leopard conservation.

#### **d) The progress made to develop the required capacities may not be enough to be sustained over the long term.**

119. Despite the good progress made by the project in its first half, the broad scope of the project strategy raises two critical questions: how sustainable capacities developed with the support of the project will be? Is the project spreading its resources too thin due to too many intervention areas and too many activities to be implemented? The strategy of the project includes the introduction of several new management concepts to conserve biodiversity such as METT, HCVF, SFM, PES, etc. These concepts require a lot of capacity development activities for being mainstreamed in key organizations responsible for managing and conserving

biodiversity. However, activities implemented during the lifetime of the project may not be enough to ensure the sustainability of project achievements. There are valid and critical questions which need to be reviewed carefully in order to maximize the sustainability of project achievements.

120. The progress made to strengthen the enabling environment (policy and legislation) to better manage and conserve biodiversity should be sustained over the long term. They are becoming part of the official instruments to manage, monitor and surveil the natural capital in Kyrgyzstan. However, the sustainability of activities implemented to raise skills and knowledge of staff, including Rangers and participating local communities, as well as strengthening organizational processes and systems are less obvious. Good progress has been made but will it be enough to sustain the introduction of these new concepts and produce a lasting positive change in illegal wildlife trade and in biodiversity conservation? A focus on these aspects is recommended for the remaining implementation period of the project.

### ***Project Implementation and Adaptive Management***

#### **e) The management arrangements are conducive for a good implementation of the project.**

121. The management arrangements as planned at the outset of the project are adequate in the context of Kyrgyzstan for the implementation of the project. The project is implemented by a good technical team of professionals bringing together a broad range of skills and knowledge in protected areas, forestry and pasture management, biodiversity conservation, local livelihood, and capacity development areas. It is conducive for a good implementation of the project; resulting in good collaborations with relevant governmental and non-governmental entities as well as with local communities in the project areas.

#### **f) The partnerships developed by the project implementation team with stakeholders and beneficiaries as well as with other related donor fund projects is excellent.**

122. The project implementation team has been able to engage well all key stakeholders in the implementation of the project. The project enjoys excellent partnerships with relevant government entities at all levels (national, regional and local); including ARIS, Association of Pasture Committees as well as non-governmental organizations such as NABU, Irbis, GSLEP, UCA, and Snow Leopard Foundation/Trust. It also enjoys an excellent coordination approach with other related donor-funded projects such as the UNDP BIOFIN project, and projects implemented by FAO, WB, IFAD and GIZ. The project also joined the *Coordination and Consultative Council*, an entity led by SAEPF and bringing together donors, and national and international stakeholders implementing forest related projects. Good coordination mechanisms are in place to collaborate among Partners, including the exchange of best practices and lessons learned. The participative and collaborative approach used by the project implementation team is conducive for this good engagement and will certainly be contributing to the sustainability of project achievements over the long term.

#### **g) The disbursements of the GEF grant is slower than the timeline (33% vs. 50%) and the full grant may not be expended by December 2021.**

123. As of end of June 2019, total expenditures amount to about USD 1.322M representing about 33% of the GEF grant versus an elapsed time of 50% (30 months out of 60). It has a remaining budget from the GEF grant of USD 2,666,794 (67%) for the remaining period of implementation. So far, 40% of the budget for outcome 1 (improving the conservation and management of KBAs) has been expended, 24% of the outcome 2 (improving ecosystem resilience) budget and 43% of the outcome 3 (strengthening Snow Leopard conservation) budget. 32% of the budget for project management has been expended, representing a ratio of 4.5% of total expenditures so far. When considering the timeline left for implementing the project (30 months), it is doubtful that the entire budget will be expended by December 2021. From an average monthly disbursement of USD 44,059 so far, the project would need to double its average monthly disbursement to USD 88,893 for the remaining implementation period. It would require a drastic change in managing the project with a significant increase of project activities and disbursements to reach this average.

#### **h) The co-financing amount committed at the outset need to be better monitored.**

124. Co-financing commitments at the outset of the project totaled USD 24,519,183, which represented about

86% of the total amount of the financial resources committed in the project document (GEF grant + co-financing). These pledged amounts were supported by co-financing letters. It includes a large amount (58%) from SAEPP, the Responsible Partner of the project, as both in-kind and through grants. UNDP was to provide less than 1% as cash (TRAC: USD 100,000) and an additional parallel financing of USD 5,427,383 (22%). Another large commitment was from the local Districts (Toktogul and Toguz-Toro) with a total co-financing contribution of 13% through grants. The rest was to come from other national entities as well as from GIZ. So far, limited reporting has been made available on co-financing contributions. Yet, Partners have certainly contributed critical resources to the implementation of this project. These co-financing commitments need to be reviewed and requests made yearly to obtain co-financed estimates from Partners.

**i) The M&E plan to measure the performance of the project include a complex set of quantitative indicators and targets and do not provide a clear measure of how well capacities are developed.**

125. The M&E function of the project is too focused on quantitative indicators. It is a convoluted set of indicators with some redundancies, in some cases difficulties to understand what they aim to measure, and most of them too wordy. Nevertheless, they give a clear measure of things and are numerically comparable; however, quantitative indicators do not depict the status of something in more qualitative terms. They do not measure well how effective the project is in developing the capacity of stakeholders in changing the way they manage and conserve biodiversity. The degree of capacity developed are often better captured by qualitative indicators. It resulted in an M&E framework that is too focused on surface areas to be covered by the project (number of ha) and on the number of participants involved in information/training events and not enough on the development of new knowledge and on increasing the skills and knowledge of stakeholders/beneficiaries, who should be able to replicate and scale-up project achievements.

**j) Communication activities and knowledge management are excellent and provide a good visibility of the project at national, regional and local levels.**

126. The project has produced excellent information products to raise awareness of stakeholders and beneficiaries and overall to emphasize the visibility of the project and its objective. The project has released numerous communication products through several channels, including YouTube videos, newsletters, magazines, social media, websites including those from partners to the project, TV channels, photo book, brochures, etc. The project set up a Facebook pages for both new SNPs: Alatai and Kan-Achuu. The list of communication products released by the project and reported in the last 2019 PIR includes over 270 pieces of communication! Many of these communication pieces were released with information/knowledge related to particular events supported by the project such as training events, handovers of equipment to SNP Rangers, meetings/workshops, environmental days, etc. Two books are worth mentioning; a book “*Lord of the Mountains*” with excellent pictures of Snow Leopards and text in both English and Russian languages providing information on history, nutrition base, habitat range of Snow Leopards; and a book “*Western Tian Shan Geological Legacy*”, published in Russian and which describes the various geological formations in the Western Tian Shan region which could be attractions to develop eco-tourism. All these communication products have contributed to the dissemination of knowledge on biodiversity conservation, including Snow Leopard conservation throughout Kyrgyzstan.

### ***Sustainability***

**k) Project achievements should be sustained over the long-term.**

127. The sustainability strategy of the project, as defined by GEF and UNDP, is viewed as an analysis of risks to sustainability. No socio-economic, nor institutional and governance nor environmental risks were found to hamper the sustainability of project achievements. The only risk to the sustainability of project achievements is the financial risk. The project has been supporting the establishment of two new SNPs, including the procurement of equipment to facilitate monitoring and surveilling fauna and flora within these new SNPs. This support accompanied by new methods, procedures and training has been optimal for the establishment of these new SNPs. However, once the project will end, financial resources will still be needed to maintain the equipment and at times to replace it, as well as the need for the government to continue to support the management of these two new SNPs. As it stands currently, the government funding to these two new SNPs is much lower than funding provided to other similar SNPs in Kyrgyzstan. Nevertheless, the

government is committed to promote better approaches to biodiversity conservation; it is a priority. Conserving biodiversity is an important sector for Kyrgyzstan, particularly for the development of eco-tourism; it is expected that the government will continue to implement this priority and support it with the necessary financial resources, including resources to scale-up project achievements to other parts of Kyrgyzstan.

## 4.2. Recommendations

128. Based on the findings of this mid-term review, the following recommendations are suggested.

**Recommendation 1: It is recommended to conduct a capacity assessment and allocate project resources to consolidate capacities during the remaining implementation period of the project.**

### *Issue to Address*

129. The scope of the project is broad. It includes the introduction of several new management concepts to conserve biodiversity such as METT, HCVF, SFM, PES, etc. Introducing these concepts require a lot of capacity development activities to mainstream them in key organizations responsible for managing and conserving biodiversity. Activities implemented during the lifetime of the project may not be enough to ensure the sustainability of project achievements. Despite the good progress made by the project so far, two critical questions are raised: how sustainable capacities developed with the support of the project are? Is the project spreading its resources too thin due to too many intervention areas and too many activities to be implemented? In order to maximize the sustainability of project achievements, it is recommended to focus on developing capacities of individuals (skills and knowledge) and on strengthening organizational processes and systems for the remaining implementation period of the project.

**Recommendation 2: It is recommended to conduct feasibility studies in the two SNPs to identify the potential for diversifying sources of income, including development of ecotourism and potential impact on local livelihoods.**

### *Issue to Address*

130. The project has been supporting the establishment of the two new SNPs: Alatai and Kan-Achuu. They still not get the same level of funding from the government as other PAs in the country. In the meantime, there are expectations that these 2 new SNPs will be able to diversify their sources of revenue and that these protected areas will also provide additional sources of income to local communities and increase their livelihoods. It is recommended to conduct feasibility studies in these 2 parks to identify potential sources of income, their feasibility and the possible economic impacts to increase livelihoods of local communities.

**Recommendation 3: It is recommended to develop a vision and objectives for the two new State National Parks: Alatai and Kan-Achuu.**

### *Issue to Address*

131. These two SNPs were created by the government of Kyrgyzstan in early 2016. The project has been supporting the establishment of a management system to manage these two parks. It has procured some critical equipment for Rangers to better monitor and surveil fauna and flora as well as equipment to facilitate their fieldwork, including riding horses and camping equipment. Management teams are in place and management systems for these parks are being developed. In the meantime, there is a limited common vision among stakeholders (SNPs staff, Rangers and local communities) and some risks around these protected areas such as mining. It is recommended to support collaboratively the development of a vision and objectives for each new State National Park.

**Recommendation 4: It is recommended to conduct a strategic review of the overall PA network in Kyrgyzstan; including its legislation, management arrangements and roles and responsibilities.**

### *Issue to Address*

132. Kyrgyzstan is on its way to increase its area of protected areas to 10% of the total territory by 2020. There is a policy and legislative framework in place. However, the network of PAs still suffers from underfunding and suboptimal management, including the fact that most PAs have no legally backed buffer

zones and no corridors for the protection of some species such as the Snow Leopard and high conservation value forests are not protected. According to the “6<sup>th</sup> National Biodiversity Report for the CBC”, the network of PA in Kyrgyzstan needs to improve its management system; its legislation to eliminate shortcomings; its management arrangements including a clearer delineation of responsibilities between state bodies, local state administrations and local self-government authorities; and its monitoring. Within the framework of the current NBSAP covering the period till 2030, it is recommended to conduct a strategic review of the PA network in Kyrgyzstan in order to identify key issues preventing the development of a more effective network and explore the solutions to address these shortcomings.

**Recommendation 5: It is recommended to increase the participation of key stakeholders in the procurement of project goods and services.**

***Issue to Address***

133. The implementation of project activities has a lot of “moving parts”, rendering the management and administration a complex affair. The project implementation team has been using a variety of management tools to get the job done efficiently: adaptive management, flexibility, consensus building, innovation, transparency, partnerships, collaborative management, etc. It has been using all available “channels” to deliver activities and reach expected results as planned. However, within this context and considering that the project implementation modality is DIM – i.e. UNDP assumes the overall management responsibility and accountability for the implementation of the project – the procurement process is still viewed as slow by stakeholders and they would like to see a more transparent/participative process in procuring project goods and services. It is recommended to increase the participation of key stakeholders in the project procurement processes.

**Recommendation 6: It is recommended to monitor the financial status of the project and request a no-cost time extension of the project if the GEF grant will not be expended by December 2017.**

***Issue to Address***

134. As of end of June 2019, total expenditures amount to about USD 1.322M representing about 33% of the GEF grant versus an elapsed time of 50% (30 months out of 60). When considering the timeline left for implementing the project (30 months), it is doubtful that the entire budget will be expended by December 2021. From an average monthly disbursement of USD 44,059 so far, the project would need to double its average monthly disbursement to USD 88,893 for the remaining implementation period. It would require a drastic change in managing the project with a significant increase of project activities and disbursements to reach this average. It is recommended to monitor the disbursements in the coming year and if needed recommend a no-cost time extension of the project to consolidate its achievements.

**Recommendation 7: It is recommended to review co-financing commitments and request yearly estimates from Partners of the project.**

***Issue to Address***

135. Co-financing commitments at the outset of the project totaled USD 24,519,183, which represented about 86% of the total amount of the financial resources committed in the project document (GEF grant + co-financing). So far, limited reporting has been made available on co-financing contributions. Yet, Partners have certainly contributed critical resources to the implementation of this project. It is recommended to review these co-financing commitments and request Partners to provide yearly estimates of their contributions.

**Recommendation 8: It is recommended to add and monitor a political risk to the project risk log.**

***Issue to Address***

136. The current risk log covers most aspects of the project where issues can arise. It includes the risk of insufficient capacity development and practical know-how within state institutions and local authorities by the end of the project to allow sustainability of project achievements; and the risk of implementing legislative changes in a timely manner that are required to develop an adequate enabling environment for the promotion of these new landscape approaches. However, one additional risk that may arise is a change in political support for promoting new landscape approaches to biodiversity conservation and for integrating these new approaches

within the environmental sector. It is recommended to add this risk to the risk log of the project and monitor/report on it yearly.

#### **4.3. Lessons Learnt**

137. Several lessons learned are presented below. There are based on the review of project documents, interviews with key informants and analysis of the information collected for this evaluation:

- A project that is a response to clear national needs and priorities is often highly relevant for beneficiaries and its chance of being implemented effectively are maximized.
- There is a high value of having a project managed by a competent and dedicated professional project team, with adequate human and financial resources to achieve the planned outputs.
- A good design leads to a good implementation, which in turn leads to good project results. There is more chance for a project well designed to be a success. Every steps of the way count in the success of a project; it is a lot easier to succeed when all these steps are relevant and clear to be implemented.
- Donor coordination of related projects done at projects level can provide a very effective way to develop synergies among actors and scaling up projects results.
- When the project covers a large geographic area, a strong communications program is vital to project success; including its visibility.
- Involving stakeholders in the early stage of project design and ensuring their participation in the implementation of project activities including their participation in decision-making enable conflict minimization and improve ownership of solutions.
- Implementation through government entities as custodians of project achievements is conducive to good long-term sustainability.

## Annex 1: Project Expected Results and Planned Activities

The table below was compiled from the list of expected results and planned activities as anticipated in the project document. It is a succinct summary of what is expected from this project.

***Project Goal:*** Improve the status of globally significant biodiversity and improve the provision of ecosystem services from forest and land resources in Kyrgyzstan's Western Tian Shan mountains, supporting sustainable livelihoods.

***Project Objective:*** To promote a landscape approach to protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan.

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
<b>Outcome 1 –</b> Conservation and sustainable management of Key Biodiversity Areas within landscape.	<b>Output 1.1:</b> Expanded operational SPNA network in the Western Tian Shan region through support to operationalize the two new State Nature Parks of Alatau and Kan-Achuu.	<b>GEF: \$1,600,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Develop new management plans for Alatau (56,826 ha) and Kan-Achuu (30,497 ha) SNPs, taking into account METT, updated biodiversity inventory data, and development of a zoning approach</li> <li>(ii) Develop appropriate SNP management tools (maps with zoning, forms of data collection and reporting, database management systems, methodology for a chronicle of nature, informational system - E-PMC)</li> <li>(iii) Support development of infrastructure and equipment procurement for Alatau and Kan-Achuu SNPs (including a transportation vehicle for each) (specifications, cost estimates and tendering, organization of procurement, training)</li> <li>(iv) Develop a training program and provide training for staff of Alatau and Kan-Achuu SNPs</li> <li>(v) Develop and implement a biodiversity research and monitoring plan in new SNPs</li> <li>(vi) Develop and start implementing a strategy for increasing the financial income (business plans) of the SNPs, including feasibility assessment of re-introduction of argali</li> <li>(vii) Develop and implement new SNPs communications strategies (information products on local biodiversity, awareness raising campaigns, including the publication about poaching and violation of legislation)..</li> </ul>
	<b>Output 1.2:</b> Upgraded status of HCVF, and sustainable forest management involving local communities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Review forest policy and legislation framework to propose integration of SFM principles and HCVF concept in existing forest management regulations and policies;</li> <li>(ii) Develop recommendations on needed changes and amendments to Kyrgyz legislation related to HCVF, and the Voluntary Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Certification</li> <li>(iii) Implement the model of Joint Forest Management (JFM) and support the work of the JFM Boards in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro leskhozes (in line with national forest sector reform process)</li> <li>(iv) Develop special HCVF regimes for SNPs, involving relevant local communities in</li> </ul>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
			<p>the planning process, and taking into account local development plans of districts and aimaks</p> <p>(v) Pilot SFM certification in the targeted Leskhozoes</p> <p>(vi) Integrate HCVF management principles into the Forest Management Plans of Toktogul (forest cover of 25,387 ha) and Toguz-Toro (forest cover of 8,995 ha) Leskhozoes, making proposals to improve FMP development methodology, taking into account latest HCVF inventory data and biodiversity data;</p> <p>(vii) Undertake inventory and registration of existing nature sanctuaries (zakazniks) in the Western Tian Shan region.</p>
	<p><b>Output 1.3:</b> Enhanced management and conservation capacities of Western Tian Shan PAs in Jalal-Abad Province, and strengthened HCVF management.</p>		<p>(i) Develop a program and provide training for PA and SAEPF staff in Western Tian Shan to implement the National Priorities on Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan, National Strategy of Snow Leopard Conservation, including the topics of conflict management and communities' involvement</p> <p>(ii) Develop capacities of four key PAs of the Western Tian Shan on financial planning, budget management, financial monitoring, controlling and reporting to increase the revenue of PAs (BioFin) and knowledge management.</p> <p>(iii) Develop and pilot the mechanisms of effective cooperation with tour operators based on appropriate agreements and services in the PAs of the region (link to BioFin) taking into account their social corporate responsibility</p> <p>(iv) Develop capacities of the Department on Forest Ecosystems and SPNA under SAEPF to manage the data of a unified national information system on Protected Areas (link to UNDP Rio Conventions project)</p> <p>(v) Develop capacities of key PAs in Western Tian Shan to collect, process and manage field data and to provide unified data to the national information system on PAs (link to UNDP Rio Conventions project)</p> <p>(vi) Develop the program and provide training on HCVF, management plans and special management regimes, to amend the current Forest Management Plans of other Western Tian Shan Leskhozoes.</p> <p>(vii) Conduct training for all Western Tian Shan Leskhozoes to strengthen law enforcement on HCVF, involving all the stakeholders.</p> <p>(viii) Elaborate and conduct awareness-raising campaigns at the national and local levels about the importance of SFM and HCVF, certification of SFM and opportunities of JFM</p> <p>(ix) Present management plans of the new SNP to relevant interest groups of the target and neighboring of Toktogul, Toguz-Toro, Aksy, Bakay-Ata districts</p> <p>(x) Conduct two provincial workshops to improve key Western Tian Shan PAs management plans based on METT, application of participatory planning approaches and community inclusion to PAs management</p> <p>(xi) Analyze key Western Tian Shan PAs' business activities and debate the business planning improvement on a Kyrgyzstan Western Tian Shan workshop</p> <p>(xii) Develop key Western Tian Shan PAs capacities to improve the public relations</p>



Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
			<p>(information products, web pages, information in social networks, etc.).</p> <p>(xiii) Provide training and integrate a separate section on snow leopard and its prey conservation in key Western Tian Shan PAs management plans, including the buffer-quiet zones and corridors, as well as changes in their pasture management practices.</p> <p>(xiv) Develop key Western Tian Shan PAs capacities to integrate wild ungulates considerations into the pasture management plans of adjacent communities</p> <p>(xv) Provide training and revise the management plans of hunting service providers in Western Tian Shan taking into account protected areas and land use in buffer zones and corridors.</p>
	<b>Output 1.4:</b> Strengthened participatory patrolling, enforcement and surveillance systems of new and existing PAs through the Local PA Management Board and joint patrol groups to enforce anti-poaching.		<p>(i) Organize and support the work of new parks' Public Management Boards with the inclusion of all local stakeholders to develop and implement their working plans</p> <p>(ii) Establish joint patrolling groups, develop their working plans and organize the joint patrol raids</p> <p>(iii) Present the best patrol practices, law enforcement, surveillance, publicity of violations and community involvement on the national workshop</p> <p>(iv) Conduct workshops in Western Tian Shan PAs to improve the system of patrolling, law enforcement and surveillance systems through the establishment of PAs' Public Management Boards, including all stakeholders, and regularly information sharing with communities</p> <p>(v) Equip Joint Patrol Groups of the pilot PAs: communication, optics, camera traps, expedition equipment</p> <p>(vi) Formalize cooperation of PAs with owners of hunting grounds for joint patrolling, monitoring and the exchange of data on biodiversity</p> <p>(vii) Conduct joint anti-poaching raids in the targeted PAs</p> <p>(viii) Incentivize rangers and other field staff to identify poaching and illegal use of natural resources cases.</p>
<b>Outcome 2 –</b> Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in Western Tian Shan are enhanced by regulating land and forest use in buffer zones and corridors and support to sustainable livelihoods.	<b>Output 2.1:</b> Identified and designated buffer zones for new SPNAs and wildlife corridors between relevant SPNAs.	<b>GEF: \$1,608,576</b>	<p>(i) Integrate the concepts "buffer-quiet zones" and "ecological corridors" in the land, forestry, hunting and biodiversity conservation legislation</p> <p>(ii) Identify and agree on at least 50,000 hectares of "buffer-quiet" zones and corridors for Alatau SNP and Kan-Achuu SNP and other nearby PAs in Western Tian Shan (maps and buffer zones' management regimes and agreement on borders with Cholpon-Ata A/O and Kyzyl-Ozgorush A/O (in Toktogul), Kok-Irim A/O and Atai A/O (in Toguz-Toro), Leskhoz and hunting grounds owners and users, State Registration Service).</p> <p>(iii) Conduct inventory assessment of the biodiversity of the buffer-quiet zones and corridors in the areas outside the PAs with the potential of sustainable non-timber forest products use.</p> <p>(iv) Conduct hunting grounds inventory and management planning in the targeted districts.</p>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(v) Develop and implement special hunting regimes for the buffer-quiet areas and wildlife corridors outside PAs in cooperation with local hunting ground users and hunters</li> <li>(vi) Create and maintain an electronic database of hunters with tracking of violators.</li> <li>(vii) Raise awareness of stakeholders about the special land use regimes of the buffer zones and corridors.</li> <li>(viii) Conclude agreements with the relevant stakeholders on the buffer zones and corridors regimes compliance.</li> <li>(ix) Support training of the relevant stakeholders and provide equipment to ensure buffer zones and corridor land use regimes.</li> <li>(x) Carry out joint raids to monitor the compliance of the buffer zones and corridors regimes.</li> <li>(xi) Analyze the compliance of the new regimes with hunting licensing practice regarding ungulates to assure the sufficient population of the snow leopard prey and propose to improve this practice..</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Output 2.2:</b> Territorial development plans of Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts and communities aligned with biodiversity conservation, SFM and SLM objectives.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Analyze the resource management and spatial development plans of the pilot districts, communities and Leskhozes management plans to integrate biodiversity conservation, and SLM and SFM issues.</li> <li>(ii) Develop program and train the representatives of the District State Administration, self-governing authorities, pasture committees, Leskhozes, and NGOs in the target areas on SFM, SLM, and biodiversity conservation issues.</li> <li>(iii) Create the working groups for the integration of these issues into development plans.</li> <li>(iv) Examine the infrastructure development and mining plans for identifying potential conflicts with protected areas in the pilot districts. Ensure integration of the mitigation measures in the plans of infrastructure development.</li> <li>(v) Organize and conduct workshops on sustainable development planning with all the above aspects for all target project partners.</li> <li>(vi) Support the organization of the coordination meetings on the pasture-related projects under the Pasture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Processing Industry and Melioration, for the presentation of the GEF project's results</li> <li>(vii) Conduct assessment of economic value of ecosystem services of PAs, forests, and pasturelands in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro Districts, including feasibility assessment for implementing PES scheme for regulation of water resources and erosion vis-a-vis hydropower plants.</li> </ul>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
	<b>Output 2.3:</b> Degraded rangelands important both for livelihoods and wildlife, including snow leopard prey species in the target districts, rehabilitated through improved local pasture management plans.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Finalize in collaboration with target communities (Cholpon-Ata and Kyzyl-Ozgorush in Toktogul, and Kok-Irim and Atai in Toguz-Toro) the field areas of eroded pastures to be restored near the new Alatau SNP and Kan-Achuu SNP.</li> <li>(ii) Study the condition of pastures, conduct the assessment of carrying capacity and create new maps to support improved grazing plans.</li> <li>(iii) Conduct the research on the interrelation between grazing and biodiversity and the impact factors of various grazing regimes on biodiversity.</li> <li>(iv) Train pilot pasture committees for the implementation of modern pasture management tools.</li> <li>(v) Support the development / improvement of pasture management plans in Pasture Management Committees (in coordination with IFAD-ARIS pastures project).</li> <li>(vi) Implement in Pasture Management Committees modern information system - Electronic Zhayyt Committee (Electronic Pasture Committee).</li> <li>(vii) Conduct the demonstration of degraded pastures rehabilitation measures</li> <li>(viii) Conduct a study on the impact of climate change on pasturelands in Western Tian Shan, to be presented at a national workshop</li> <li>(ix) Conduct an inventory of forest pastures and develop management plans for forest pastures and grazing in the pilot Leskhoz and present the results at the national workshop - implementing outsourcing of Leskhoz forest pasture management to PMCs using pastures (<i>replication of approach piloted by GIZ</i>).</li> </ul>
	<b>Output 2.4:</b> Restoration of degraded forests important for wildlife, including snow leopard prey, and livelihoods of local communities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Carry out geo-botanic and economic analysis and analysis of ecosystem services and opportunities of reforestation in the Western Tian Shan.</li> <li>(ii) Finalize the decision in collaboration with communities the 4,886 hectares of degraded forests in the buffer zones and corridors of the protected areas and areas for silviculture and support the natural regeneration of the HCVF</li> <li>(iii) Organize and conduct silvicultural reforestation work in the area of 500 hectares</li> <li>(iv) Support the work of the target partners on natural regeneration of the area of 4,000 – 4,500 hectares, including sustainable financing fencing approach (piloted by GIZ).</li> </ul>
	<b>Output 2.5:</b> Alternative livelihoods program for local communities designed jointly with the local micro-crediting institutions and launched to support target communities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Conduct consultations and identify mechanisms of the Micro-Grant Support Program</li> <li>(ii) Create local micro-grant committees, develop and approve the rules of operation, selection criteria, application forms, rules for reporting, rules of monitoring and control (or enter into contracts with the local financial institution(s) to implement micro-grant activities);</li> <li>(iii) Conduct an information campaign in the field about the possibility of supporting sustainable livelihoods (creation of nurseries, gardens, plantations of fast-growing, organic farming, restoration of pasture - reseeding, medicinal plants, ecotourism, micro greenhouses, apiary, etc.)</li> <li>(iv) Provide micro-grants – years 2, 3, 4</li> <li>(v) Conduct the systematic controlling and monitoring of projects</li> </ul>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
			(vi) Make an assessment and publish best practices;
<b>Outcome 3 -</b> Strengthened national capacities for snow leopard conservation, promoting Kyrgyz regional and global cooperation, and setting the scene for up-scaling.	<b>Output 3.1:</b> Law enforcement capacities of relevant stakeholders enhanced through trainings on wildlife protection aimed at identification and prosecution of wildlife crime.	<b>GEF: \$590,068</b>	(i) Develop and implement advanced wildlife related law enforcement training to strengthen national capacities for identification and prosecution of wildlife crime and controlling trade in snow leopard and other illegal wildlife goods, based on review of existing initiatives and remaining capacity gaps (building on previous preliminary partner efforts) (ii) Train identified target groups on wildlife protection and identification and prosecution of wildlife crime (iii) Enhance national wildlife law enforcement capacity from scaling-up initiative on canine-assisted wildlife crime monitoring (initiative led by Panthera) (iv) Support institutionalization of capacity development modules (training modules, etc.) into law enforcement agency action plans to ensure sustainability (v) Support the fully operational and institutionalized inter-agency cross-sectoral cooperation mechanism / agreements / MOUs among the relevant agencies for snow leopard-related law enforcement and joint actions on illegal snow leopard trade. Preparation and modification of the regulations for the sustainable cooperation between agencies. (vi) Support establishment of cross-sectoral coordination mechanism put in place on the provincial and district levels (vii) Assess the needs of field-based technical capacity for wildlife law enforcement. Enhancement of field law enforcement capacity - potential equipment, etc. to support enforcement (viii) Set up the unified reporting system on wildlife crime (ix) Conduct feasibility study for field toolkits for species identification with field-based DNA analysis (x) Conduct feasibility study for possibilities and relevance for micro chipping of trophies.
	<b>Output 3.2:</b> Capacities for deployment of international standards for long-term monitoring of parameters critical for snow leopard conservation in national priority landscapes developed, based on international GSLEP monitoring framework.		(i) For national stakeholders responsible for snow leopard monitoring - establishment of monitoring protocols, provision of field kits, camera traps, other monitoring tools and approaches, etc. – for monitoring activities in national priority snow leopard landscapes. Develop capacities and equip research institutions to provide adequate snow leopard monitoring support - focused on Western Tian Shan PAs and Gissar-Alai priority landscape. (ii) Provide training for protected area staff (strategically selected, among sites other than Alatau and Kan-Achuu PAs) on snow leopard and prey monitoring - focused on key Western Tian Shan PAs and Gissar-Alai priority landscape. (iii) Develop snow leopard monitoring database and adequate database management capacities (iv) Provide training for hunting department, and National Academy of Sciences on

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
			<p>snow leopard and prey international standards of monitoring - focused on Western Tian Shan PAs and Gissar-Alai priority landscape</p> <p>(v) Develop and sign special MOUs on monitoring between protected areas, National Academy of Sciences, and hunting department, relating to snow leopard and prey species, with collaboration with relevant international partner organizations</p> <p>(vi) Conduct joint expeditions for monitoring and training with hunting department, protected areas, and National Academy of Sciences staff - reporting of results to national databases, etc. - publishing of results - focused on Western Tian Shan PAs and Gissar-Alai priority landscape.</p> <p>(vii) Sign an international MOU with a genetic laboratory that has experience and technical capacity to identify snow leopard samples from scats, hair follicles and blood, located in one of the snow leopard range countries, to have compatible and high quality results of analysis for basic (species-level) genetic monitoring of populations and wildlife crime.</p>
	<p><b>Output 3.3:</b> Kyrgyzstan participation in the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programs supported, aimed at synergies and coordination of national, transboundary and regional level activities.</p>		<p>(i) Support for Kyrgyzstan's participation in international snow leopard events: SAEPP, academia and PA field staff. International best practice sharing for replication and up-scaling. Support for travel to conferences, etc.</p> <p>(ii) Conduct one regional conference (with three countries) on challenges for conservation of snow leopards and biodiversity in Western Tian Shan - Organization of a regional conference between Western Tian Shan countries for cross-border cooperation on sharing data for snow leopard monitoring in Western Tian Shan – resolution between countries. Discussion of threats to biodiversity related to border control activities and presence.</p> <p>(iii) Support for participation in 2nd Global Snow Leopard summit</p> <p>(iv) Develop information material on conservation issues of snow leopard and biodiversity in Kyrgyzstan and distribute in the countries of Central Asia – as necessary and relevant to support Kyrgyzstan contributions to global snow leopard conservation efforts.</p>
	<p><b>Output 3.4:</b> Implementation of Kyrgyzstan's NSSLC supported in nationally identified priority landscapes provided, in alignment and coordination with GSLEP and other relevant initiatives.</p>		<p>(i) Support dissemination of GSLEP best practices in Western Tian Shan and Gissar-Alai regions</p> <p>(ii) Contribute to national Kyrgyzstan SSLC awareness raising and knowledge management activities - national education and awareness campaigns as appropriate, etc.</p> <p>(iii) Convert accumulated snow leopard monitoring and research data into addendums to education programs for universities and secondary schools</p> <p>(iv) Updated mapping of snow leopard range and other factors at national level, based on a digital map of snow leopard habitat in Kyrgyzstan, with annotated recommendations for land use regimes in key areas of importance for snow leopard</p> <p>(v) Work on hunting policies of prey at national level – linked with previous activities in Component 2 about influencing hunting lease policies, policies on hunting of Red</p>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
			List species, etc. (vi) Support implementation of recommendations from Kyrgyzstan NSSLC in Western Tian Shan and Gissar-Alai that are not otherwise covered by project activities under Components 1 and 2.
<b>Project Management</b>		<b>GEF: \$189,931</b>	
	<b>Total GEF Grant</b>	<b>GEF: \$3,988,575 + Co-financing: \$24,519,183 = Total: \$28,507,758</b>	

Source: Project Document

## Annex 2: MTR Terms of Reference



### UNDP-GEF Midterm Review

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

**International Consultant to conduct Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNDP-GEF project “Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods”**

#### **BASIC CONTRACT INFORMATION**

**Location:** Kyrgyzstan

**Application Deadline:** March 15, 2019

**Category:** Monitoring and Evaluation, Biodiversity

**Type of Contract:** Individual Contract

**Assignment Type:** International Consultant

**Languages Required:** English

**Starting Date:** approx. April 8, 2019

**Duration of Initial Contract:** 28 effective person-days

**Expected Duration of Assignment:** Estimated 28 effective person-days during April-May 2019 (home based and 9 effective person-days for in-country mission to Kyrgyzstan - 4 days in Bishkek city and 5 days for the field visits to the protected areas in Toguz Toro and Toktogul districts).

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### **A. Project Title**

“Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods”

##### **B. Project Description**

This is the Terms of Reference for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the full-sized project titled “Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods” (PIMS 5411) implemented through the UNDP in the Kyrgyz Republic, which is to be undertaken in 2019. The project started on 17 March 2017 and is in its second year of implementation. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#).

The project draws on a landscape conservation and management approach, understanding that not only Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA), but also buffer zones, corridors and sustainable forest and pasture management in wider landscape are the key to the conservation of biodiversity, and the sustainable use of forest and land resources. This includes the survival of snow leopard and its prey species, as well as sustainable local community development. The project is organized into three components.

**Component I** is focused on key biodiversity areas: PAs and HCVPs. This includes operationalizing two new PAs (87,323 ha) for underrepresented globally significant species that were formally established in anticipation of this project. In addition, the management capacity for four previously established PAs (total of 198,776 ha) in the Western Tian Shan will be strengthened. HCVP areas (40,839 ha) will be formally recognized and conserved and enhanced forest management capacity will be developed.

**Component II** will ensure continuity and congruence between KBAs and use of land and forest resources in wider productive landscapes. There are two administrative districts adjoining to the PAs in question: Toktogul and Toguz-Toro. The project will assist in integration of SFM and SLM approaches to improve land use practice reducing degradation and erosion. For the two new protected areas buffer zones and corridors (50,000 ha) will be established and integrated in spatial planning (with total indirect coverage of 944,317 ha), with modified

resource use in these areas focused on sustainable economic activities, such as managed hunting areas, regulated grazing, and ecotourism. The project aims to institute SLM in pasturelands (147,268 ha) used by four target communities neighboring PAs, which will lead to restoration of least 65,361 ha of degraded pastures in Toktogul and Toguz-Toro districts. Targeted restoration of degraded forest ecosystems will be undertaken of approximately 4,886 ha.

**Component III** links activities supporting snow leopard conservation under Components I and II with relevant activities at the national level. This includes building the capacity of Kyrgyzstan stakeholders with respect to implementation of the National Strategy for Snow Leopard Conservation (NSSL) for 2013-2023. Support will be provided to deploy unified international snow leopard monitoring standards, with support targeted to priority national snow leopard conservation landscapes. It will also support application of international standards in wildlife trafficking enforcement and provide opportunities for appropriate trainings and exchange with other countries in the snow leopard range.

**Project Summary Table**

<b>Project Title:</b>	“Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods”
<b>Executing Agency:</b>	UNDP
<b>Business Unit:</b>	KGZ10
<b>PAC Meeting Date:</b>	13 Jan 2017
<b>Award ID:</b>	00097902
<b>Atlas Project ID:</b>	000101450
<b>PIMS number:</b>	5411
<b>Start Date:</b>	January 2017
<b>End Date:</b>	December 2021
<b>Management Arrangement:</b>	DIM9
<b>Total budget (US\$):</b>	<b>\$ 28,507,758.00</b>
<b>GEF</b>	<b>\$ 3,988,575.00</b>
<b>National government</b>	<b>\$ 14,864,800.00</b>
<b>Local government</b>	<b>\$ 3,200,000.00</b>
<b>UNDP</b>	<b>\$ 5,527,383.00</b>
<b>Bilateral Partners</b>	<b>\$ 627,000.00</b>
<b>NGOs</b>	<b>\$ 300,000.00</b>

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **C. Scope of Work and Key Tasks**

The MTR will be conducted by an independent international consultant with support of an Interpreter (speaking Russian, English and Kyrgyz languages). The consultant shall have a prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage. The International Consultant will bear responsibility over submission of a final report. The selected evaluator should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The MTR consultant will first conduct a desk review of the project documents (i.e. PIF, Project Document, AWP, Project Inception Report, PIRs, Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools, Project Board meetings’ minutes, Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team, project operational guidelines, manuals and systems, etc.) provided by the Project Team and Commissioning Unit. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in Annex A of this Terms of Reference. Then they will participate in an MTR inception workshop to clarify their understanding of the objectives and methods of the MTR, producing the MTR inception report thereafter.

The MTR mission will then consist of interviews and site visits to following:

- The State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (SAEPF) – GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) and its relevant departments;

<sup>9</sup> According to DIM Authorization for Kyrgyzstan Country Programme 2012-2016, Kori Udovički, Regional Director, dd. 11 January 2012.



- The Department of Pastures under the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- National Academy of Science of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Local administrations of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in Toktogul and Toguz Toro districts;
- State Nature Park “Alatau” in Toktogul district;
- State Nature Park “Kanachuu” in Toguz Toro district;
- FAO, SLT, SLF, GSLEP, WWF, WB-GEF Project unit;
- NGOs;
- UNDP CO Senior Management;
- UNDP CO M&E Officer;
- UNDP National Gender Coordinator;
- UNDP IRH Regional Technical Advisor;
- UNDP “Environment, climate change and disaster risk management” Programme;
- UNDP BIOFIN Project;
- UNDP PIU office in Toktogul.

The MTR consultant will assess the following four categories of project progress and produce a draft and final MTR report. See the [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#) for requirements on ratings. No overall rating is required.

## 1. Project Strategy

### *Project Design:*

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results.
- Review how the project addresses country priorities
- Review decision-making processes

### *Results and Resources Framework / Logframe:*

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project’s logframe indicators and targets, assess how “SMART” the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women’s empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.

## 1. Progress Towards Results

- Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets; populate the Progress Towards Results Matrix, as described in the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a “traffic light system” based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for the project objective and each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as “not on target to be achieved” (red).
- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

## 2. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Using the *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*, assess the following categories of project progress:

- Management Arrangements
- Work Planning
- Finance and co-finance
- Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Reporting
- Communications

### 3. Sustainability

Assess overall risks to sustainability factors of the project in terms of the following four categories:

- Financial risks to sustainability
- Socio-economic risks to sustainability
- Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability
- Environmental risks to sustainability

The MTR consultant will include a section in the MTR report setting out the MTR's evidence-based **conclusions**, in light of the findings.

Additionally, the MTR consultant is expected to make **recommendations** to the Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. The MTR consultant should make no more than 15 recommendations in total.

#### **D. Expected Outputs and Deliverables**

The MTR consultant shall prepare and submit:

<b>Products</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Approximate due dates:</b>
MTR Inception Report	MTR consultant clarifies objectives and methods of the Midterm Review no later than 1 week before the MTR in-country mission. To be sent to the Commissioning Unit and Project Management.	<b>April 14, 2019</b>
Presentation of initial findings	Initial Findings presented to Project Management and the Commissioning Unit at the end of the MTR in-country mission.	<b>April 30, 2019</b>
Draft Final MTR Report	Full report with annexes within 2 weeks after the MTR in-country mission has been completed.	<b>May 16, 2019</b>
Final MTR Report*	Revised report with annexed audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report. To be sent to the Commissioning Unit within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft.	<b>May 30, 2019</b>

\* The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

#### **E. Institutional Arrangement**

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is the UNDP Country Office in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultant, and ensure the timely provision of due payments and travel arrangements within the country for the MTR consultant. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR consultant to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

The Certifying Officer of this assignment is UNDP CO Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.

## F. Duration of the Work

The total duration of the MTR will be 28 effective person-days during April-May 2019 / *starting from April 8, 2019 and ending by May 30, 2019.*

The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

- 3 days: Desk review and preparing MTR Inception Report;
- 2 days: Finalization and Validation of MTR Inception Report- latest start of MTR in-country mission;
- 9 days: MTR in-country mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits (including Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings - earliest end of MTR mission);
- 7 days: Preparing draft report;
- 3 days: Incorporating audit trail on draft report;
- 4 days: Finalization of MTR report/Expected full MTR completion.

The start date of the contract is planned for April 8, 2019.

## G. Duty Station (home based)

### Travels:

- One in-country 9 effective person-days mission to Kyrgyzstan: 4 days in Bishkek and 5 days for the field mission to Toktogul and Toguz-Toro;
- The BSAFE, Basic Security in the Field II and Advanced Security in the Field courses **must** be successfully completed prior to commencement of travel;
- Statement of Medical Fitness for Work:
  - Individual Consultants/Contractors whose assignments require travel and who are over 62 years of age are required, at their own cost, to undergo a full medical examination including x-rays and obtaining medical clearance from an UN - approved doctor prior to taking up their assignment.
  - Where there is no UN office nor a UN Medical Doctor present in the location of the Individual Contractor prior to commencing the travel, either for repatriation or duty travel, the Individual Contractor may choose his/her own preferred physician to obtain the required medical clearance.
  - Inoculations/Vaccinations
  - Individual Consultants/Contractors are required to have vaccinations/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director. The cost of required vaccinations/inoculations, when foreseeable, must be included in the financial proposal. Any unforeseeable vaccination/inoculation cost will be reimbursed by UNDP;
- Consultant is required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under <https://dss.un.org/dssweb/>.
- The Individual Consultant must obtain security clearance before travelling to the duty station;
- All envisaged travel costs must be included in the financial proposal. This includes all travel to duty station. UNDP should not accept travel costs exceeding those of an economy class ticket and daily allowance exceeding UNDP rates. Should the IC wish to travel on a higher class he/she should do so using their own resources.

## REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

### H. Qualifications of the Successful Applicants

Qualifications
Master's degree in natural resource management / environmental management / public administration
Minimum 5 years of professional experience in the field of environmental management
Proven track record of evaluation of projects focusing on conservation of biodiversity and/or land degradation confirmed with at least two project evaluations
At least one project evaluation with GEF M&E policies and procedures
Knowledge of priorities and principles of biodiversity conservation confirmed with at least two projects

experiences from Central Asian or CIS countries would be an asset
Excellent English communication skills, knowledge of Russian would be an asset

### ***Consultant's Independence:***

The consultant cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **I. Scope of Price Proposal and Schedule of Payments**

#### ***Financial Proposal:***

- Financial proposals must be “all inclusive” and expressed in a lump sum for the total duration of the contract. The term “all inclusive” implies all cost (professional fees, travel costs, living allowances etc.);
- Individual on this contract is not UN staff and are therefore not entitled to DSAs. All living allowances required to perform the demands of the ToR must be incorporated in the financial proposal, whether the fees are expressed as daily fees or lump sum amount;
- The lump sum is fixed regardless of changes in the cost components.

#### ***Schedule of Payments:***

The service provider will be responsible for all personal administrative and travel expenses associated with undertaking this assignment including office accommodation, printing, stationary, telephone and electronic communications, and report copies incurred in this assignment. For this reason, the contract is prepared as a lump sum contract.

The remuneration of work performed will be conducted as follows: lump sum payable in 2 installments, upon satisfactory completion and approval by UNDP of all deliverables, including the Final MTR Report.

**April 14, 2019** - 20% upon submission of the MTR Inception Report;  
**May 31, 2019** - 80% upon submission and approval of the MTR Report.

### **J. Recommended Presentation of Offer**

Candidates meeting the minimum ToR requirements will be sourced from the [UNDP IRH vetted roster of experts](#) and will be invited to submit the following documents:

- a) Completed **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the [template](#) provided by UNDP;
- b) **Personal CV or a P11 Personal History form**, indicating all past experience from similar projects, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the Candidate;
- c) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template provided - “Letter of Confirmation of Interest template for financial proposal template”.

**Incomplete applications will be excluded from further consideration.**

Application documents should be submitted no later than **17:00 March 15, 2019** to email: [kumar.kylychev@undp.org](mailto:kumar.kylychev@undp.org).

### **K. Criteria for Selection of the Best Offer**

UNDP applies a fair and transparent selection process that will take into account the competencies/skills of the applicants as well as their financial proposals. Qualified women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.

The award of the contract will be made to the Individual Consultant who offers the best value for money.

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ToR Annex A: List of documents for review by the International Consultant  
ToR ANNEX B: Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report<sup>10</sup>  
ToR ANNEX C: Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template  
ToR ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants  
ToR ANNEX E: MTR Ratings  
ToR ANNEX F: MTR Report Clearance Form  
ToR ANNEX G: Project Results Framework

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<sup>10</sup> The Report length should not exceed ~~40~~ pages in total (not including annexes).

### Annex 3: UNEG Code of Conduct for Reviewers and Agreement Form

#### ***Evaluators / Consultants:***

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

#### ***Mid-Term Review Consultant Agreement Form***

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

***I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.***

Signed in Ottawa on June 2, 2019



Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Consultant: ***Jean-Joseph Bellamy***

## Annex 4: Review Matrix

The evaluation matrix below served as a general guide for the review. It provided directions for the review; particularly for the collection of relevant data. It was used as a basis for interviewing people and reviewing project documents. It also provided a basis for structuring the review report as a whole.

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<b>Review criteria: Relevance</b> - How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF, UNDP and of Kyrgyzstan to strengthen its capacity to manage land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation?				
<i>Is the Project relevant to the GEF objectives?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the Project support the related strategic priorities of the GEF?</li> <li>Were GEF criteria for project identification adequate in view of actual needs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of coherence between project objectives and those of the GEF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>GEF policies and strategies</li> <li>GEF web site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analyses</li> <li>Interviews with government officials and other partners</li> </ul>
<i>Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the project support the objectives of UNDP in this sector?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of a clear relationship between project objectives and country programme objectives of UNDP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>UNDP strategies and programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analyses</li> <li>Interviews with government officials and other partners</li> </ul>
<i>Is the Project relevant to Kyrgyzstan's capacity to manage land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project follow the government's stated priorities?</li> <li>How does the Project support the management of land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan?</li> <li>Does the project address the identified problem?</li> <li>How country-driven is the Project?</li> <li>Does the Project adequately take into account national realities, both in terms of institutional framework and programming, in its design and its implementation?</li> <li>To what extent were national partners involved in the design of the Project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree to which the project support the management of land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan</li> <li>Degree of coherence between the project and national priorities, policies and strategies; particularly related to the management of land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan</li> <li>Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities?</li> <li>Level of involvement of Government officials and other partners into the project</li> <li>Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and UNDP criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>National policies, strategies and programmes</li> <li>Key government officials and other partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analyses</li> <li>Interviews with government officials and other partners</li> </ul>
<i>Does the Project address the needs of target beneficiaries?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the project support the needs of target beneficiaries?</li> <li>Is the implementation of the project been inclusive of all relevant Stakeholders?</li> <li>Are local beneficiaries and stakeholders adequately involved in project formulation and implementation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strength of the link between project expected results and the needs of target beneficiaries</li> <li>Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of beneficiaries and stakeholders in project design and implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficiaries and stakeholders</li> <li>Needs assessment studies</li> <li>Project documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholders</li> </ul>

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<i>Is the Project internally coherent in its design?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the project sourced through a demand-driven approach?</li> <li>Is there a direct and strong link between project expected results (Result and Resources Framework) and the project design (in terms of project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources etc.)?</li> <li>Is the length of the project conducive to achieve project outcomes?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of coherence between project expected results and internal project design logic</li> <li>Level of coherence between project design and project implementation approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program and project documents</li> <li>Key project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Key Interviews</li> </ul>
<i>How is the Project relevant in light of other donors?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With regards to Kyrgyzstan, does the project remain relevant in terms of areas of focus and targeting of key activities?</li> <li>How does the GEF help to fill gaps (or give additional stimulus) that are crucial but are not covered by other donors?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree to which the project was coherent and complementary to other donor programming in Kyrgyzstan</li> <li>List of programs and funds in which future developments, ideas and partnerships of the project are eligible?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other Donors' policies and programming documents</li> <li>Other Donor representatives</li> <li>Project documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analyses</li> <li>Interviews with other Donors</li> </ul>
<b>Future directions for similar Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What lessons have been learnt and what changes could have been made to the project in order to strengthen the alignment between the project and the Partners' priorities and areas of focus?</li> <li>How could the project better target and address priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collected throughout evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Review criteria: Effectiveness – To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?</b>				
<i>How is the Project effective in achieving its expected outcomes?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is the project being effective in achieving its expected outcomes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation and sustainable management of Key Biodiversity Areas within landscape</li> <li>Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in Western Tian Shan are enhanced by regulating land and forest use in buffer zones and corridors and support to sustainable livelihoods</li> <li>Strengthened national capacities for snow leopard conservation, promoting Kyrgyz regional and global cooperation, and setting the scene for up-scaling</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New methodologies, skills and knowledge</li> <li>Change in capacity for managing land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan</li> <li>Change in capacity for awareness raising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder involvement and government awareness</li> <li>Change in local stakeholder behavior</li> </ul> </li> <li>Change in capacity in policy making and planning to improve the management of land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy reform</li> <li>Legislation/regulation change</li> <li>Development of national and local strategies and plans</li> </ul> </li> <li>Change in capacity in implementation and enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and implementation of risk assessments</li> <li>Implementation of national and local strategies and action plans through adequate institutional frameworks and their maintenance</li> <li>Monitoring, evaluation and promotion of pilots</li> </ul> </li> <li>Change in capacity in mobilizing resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage of resources</li> <li>Human resources</li> <li>Appropriate practices</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Key stakeholders including UNDP, Project Team, Representatives of Gov. and other Partners</li> <li>Research findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analysis</li> <li>Meetings with main Project Partners</li> <li>Interviews with project beneficiaries</li> </ul>



Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
		o Mobilization of advisory services		
<i>How is risk and risk mitigation being managed?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well are risks and assumptions being managed?</li> <li>What is the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Are they sufficient?</li> <li>Are there clear strategies for risk mitigation related with long-term sustainability of the project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during project planning</li> <li>Quality of existing information systems in place to identify emerging risks and other issues?</li> <li>Quality of risk mitigations strategies developed and followed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Atlas risk log</li> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>UNDP, Project Staff and Project Partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Future directions for similar Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What lessons have been learnt for the project to achieve its outcomes?</li> <li>What changes could have been made (if any) to the formulation of the project in order to improve the achievement of project's expected results?</li> <li>How could the project be more effective in achieving its results?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collected throughout evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Review criteria: Efficiency – Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively and in-line with international and national norms and standards?</b>				
<i>Is Project support channeled in an efficient way?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?</li> <li>Does the Project Results Framework and work plans and any changes made to them used as management tools during implementation?</li> <li>Are the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial information?</li> <li>How adequate is the M&amp;E framework (indicators &amp; targets)?</li> <li>Are progress reports produced accurately, timely and responded to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?</li> <li>Is project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual)?</li> <li>Is the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happened as planned?</li> <li>Are financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently?</li> <li>How is RBM used during project implementation?</li> <li>Is the project decision-making effective?</li> <li>Does the government provide continuous strategic directions to the project's formulation and implementation?</li> <li>Have these directions provided by the government guided the activities and outcomes of the project?</li> <li>Are there an institutionalized or informal feedback or dissemination mechanisms to ensure that findings, lessons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability and quality of financial and progress reports</li> <li>Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided</li> <li>Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures</li> <li>Planned vs. actual funds leveraged</li> <li>Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar projects from other organizations</li> <li>Adequacy of project choices in view of existing context, infrastructure and cost</li> <li>Quality of RBM reporting (progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation)</li> <li>Occurrence of change in project formulation/ implementation approach (i.e. restructuring) when needed to improve project efficiency</li> <li>Existence, quality and use of M&amp;E, feedback and dissemination mechanism to share findings, lessons learned and recommendation on effectiveness of project design.</li> <li>Cost associated with delivery mechanism and management structure compare to alternatives</li> <li>Gender disaggregated data in project documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>UNDP, Representatives of Gov. and Project Staff</li> <li>Beneficiaries and Project partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Key Interviews</li> </ul>

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
	<p>learned and recommendations pertaining to project formulation and implementation effectiveness were shared among project stakeholders, UNDP staff and other relevant organizations for ongoing project adjustment and improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation?</li> </ul>			
<i>How efficient are partnership arrangements for the Project?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the government engaged?</li> <li>How does the government demonstrate its ownership of the projects?</li> <li>Did the government provide a counterpart to the project?</li> <li>To what extent partnerships/linkages between institutions/organizations are encouraged and supported?</li> <li>Which partnerships/linkages are facilitated? Which one can be considered sustainable?</li> <li>What is the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? (between local actors, UNDP and relevant government entities)</li> <li>Which methods were successful or not and why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners,</li> <li>Examples of supported partnerships</li> <li>Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained</li> <li>Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>Project Partners</li> <li>UNDP, Representatives of Gov. and Project Staff</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
<i>Does the Project efficiently utilize local capacity in implementation ?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise as well as local capacity?</li> <li>Does the project support mutual benefits through sharing of knowledge and experiences, training, technology transfer among developing countries?</li> <li>Did the Project take into account local capacity in formulation and implementation of the project?</li> <li>Was there an effective collaboration with scientific institutions with competence in management of land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of total expertise utilized taken from Kyrgyzstan</li> <li>Number/quality of analyses done to assess local capacity potential and absorptive capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>UNDP, Project Team and Project partners</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Future directions for similar Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What lessons can be learnt from the project on efficiency?</li> <li>How could the project have more efficiently addressed its key priorities (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements etc....)?</li> <li>What changes could have been made (if any) to the project in order to improve its efficiency?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collected throughout evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Review criteria: Impacts - Are there indications that the project has contributed to the improvement of the management of land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan?</b>				
<i>How is the Project effective in</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will the project achieve its objective that is to promote a landscape approach to protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes in capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To pool/mobilize resources</li> <li>To provide an enabling environment,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Key Stakeholders</li> <li>Research findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents analysis</li> <li>Meetings with UNDP, Project Team and project Partners</li> </ul>

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<i>achieving its long-term objectives?</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For implementation of related strategies and programmes through adequate institutional frameworks and their maintenance,</li> <li>▪ Changes in use and implementation of sustainable alternatives</li> <li>▪ Changes to critical threats to biodiversity in Western Tian Shan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pasture Degradation from Poor Grazing Management</li> <li>○ Human-Wildlife Conflicts</li> <li>○ Overgrazing in Forests</li> <li>○ Unsustainable Use of Forests</li> <li>○ Legal and Illegal Hunting of Ungulates</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Changes to the quantity and strength of barriers such as change in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Weak management of Key Biodiversity Areas</li> <li>○ Unsustainable management of land and forest in wider landscape</li> <li>○ Low uptake of and capacity to implement international best practices for snow leopard conservation and management of its habitat</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interviews with project beneficiaries and other stakeholders</li> </ul>
<i>How is the Project impacting the local environment?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the impacts or likely impacts of the project on? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local environment;</li> <li>○ Poverty; and,</li> <li>○ Other socio-economic issues.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide specific examples of impacts at those three levels, as relevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project documents</li> <li>▪ Key Stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Research findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data analysis</li> <li>▪ Interviews with key stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Future directions for the Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How could the project build on its successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data collected throughout evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Review criteria: Sustainability - To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?</b>				
<i>Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Were sustainability issues integrated into the formulation and implementation of the project?</li> <li>▪ Does the project employ government implementing and/or monitoring systems?</li> <li>▪ Is the government involved in the sustainability strategy for project outcomes?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence/Quality of sustainability strategy</li> <li>▪ Evidence/Quality of steps taken to address sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>▪ UNDP, project staff and project Partners</li> <li>▪ Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document analysis</li> <li>▪ Interviews</li> </ul>

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<i>Project design?</i>				
<i>Did the project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues?</li> <li>Are the recurrent costs (if any) after project completion sustainable?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level and source of future financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities after project end?</li> <li>Evidence of commitments from international partners, governments or other stakeholders to financially support relevant sectors of activities after project end</li> <li>Level of recurrent costs after completion of project and funding sources for those recurrent costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>UNDP, project staff and project Partners</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
<i>Organizations arrangements and continuation of activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are results of efforts made during the project implementation period well assimilated by organizations and their internal systems and procedures?</li> <li>Is there evidence that project partners will continue their activities beyond project support?</li> <li>Has there been a buy-in process, or was there no need to sell the project and buy support?</li> <li>What degree is there of local ownership of initiatives and results?</li> <li>Are appropriate ‘champions’ being identified and/or supported?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree to which project activities and results have been taken over by local counterparts or institutions/organizations</li> <li>Level of financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities by in-country actors after project end</li> <li>Number/quality of champions identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>UNDP, project staff and project Partners</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
<i>Enabling Environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are laws, policies and frameworks addressed through the project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms?</li> <li>Are the necessary related capacities for lawmaking and enforcement built?</li> <li>What is the level of political commitment to build on the results of the project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efforts to support the development of relevant laws and policies</li> <li>State of enforcement and law making capacity</li> <li>Evidence of commitment by the political class through speeches, enactment of laws and resource allocation to priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>UNDP, project staff and project Partners</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
<i>Institutional and individual capacity building</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the capacity in place at the national and sub-national levels adequate to ensure sustainability of results achieved to date?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elements in place in those different management functions, at appropriate levels (national and sub-national levels) in terms of adequate structures, strategies, systems, skills, incentives and interrelationships with other key actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>UNDP, Project staff and project Partners</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> <li>Capacity assessments available, if any</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Documentation review</li> </ul>
<i>Social and political sustainability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the project contribute to key building blocks for social and political sustainability?</li> <li>Did the project contribute to local Stakeholders’ acceptance of the new practices?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Example of contributions to sustainable political and social change with regard to improving the management of land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>UNDP, project staff and project Partners</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Documentation review</li> </ul>
<i>Replication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were project activities and results replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number/quality of replicated initiatives</li> <li>Number/quality of replicated innovative initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other donor programming documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was the project contribution to replication or scaling up of innovative practices or mechanisms to improve the management of land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan?</li> <li>Does the project has a catalytic role?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volume of additional investment leveraged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficiaries</li> <li>UNDP, project staff and project Partners</li> </ul>	
<i>Challenges to sustainability of the Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of efforts?</li> <li>Have any of these been addressed through project management?</li> <li>What could be the possible measures to further contribute to the sustainability of efforts achieved with the project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges in view of building blocks of sustainability as presented above</li> <li>Recent changes which may present new challenges to the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents and evaluations</li> <li>Beneficiaries</li> <li>UNDP, project staff and project Partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analysis</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Future directions for the Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which areas/arrangements under the project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results?</li> <li>What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed?</li> <li>How can the experience and good project practices influence the strategies to improve the management of land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan?</li> <li>Are national decision-making institutions (Parliament, Government etc.) ready to improve their measures to improve the management of land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collected throughout evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>

## Annex 5: List of Documents Reviewed

Alexei Dudasvili, *Geological Heritage - Western Tien Shan – The Basis for Biodiversity Conservation and Ecotourism Development*

BIOFIN, UNDP, *The Biodiversity Finance Initiative – Mobilizing Resources for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development (Snow Leopard Poster)*

FAO, GEF, *Project Document: Sustainable management of mountainous forest and land resources under climate change conditions - Kyrgyzstan*

GEF, *GEF-6 Programming Directions*

GEF, *GEF-6 Request for Project Endorsement / Approval – WTS Project*

GEF, *GEF Secretariat Review for Full/Mid-Sized Projects – WTS Project*

GEF, November 18, 2016, *Letter from GEF-CEO to GEF Council Members*

GEF, *PIF – WTS Project*

GEF, UNDP, 2018, *Lord of the Mountains (Photo Album)*

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Concept Digital Transformation – Digital Kyrgyzstan 2019-2023*

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Decree April 20, 2018, No 2377-VI, The Development Program of the Kyrgyz Republic for the Period 2018-2022*

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Decree No. 36 January 31, 2019, Program of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for the Development of the Tourism Sector for 2019-2023*

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Gender Aspects of Sustainable Development*

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Government Statement from 27 June 2012, №443 on the KR National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality by 2020 and the National Plan of Actions for 2012-2014 to Achieve Gender Equality in KR*

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Order February 15, 2019, No. 20-r, Road Map for the implementation of the Digital Transformation Concept "Digital Kyrgyzstan 2019-2023"*

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Resolution of June 27, 2012, No. 443, About the National Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic on Achieving Gender Equality until 2020 and the National Action Plan on Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic*

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Several Laws related to biodiversity conservation and management of natural resources*

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, *UNDP, Project Document: WTS Project*

IUCN, *Training Manual – Economic Valuation and Environmental Assessment*

Ministry of Environmental Protection, *Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*

National Council for Sustainable Development for the Kyrgyz Republic, *Presidential Decree, January 21, 2013, No. 11, National Strategy Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for the Period 2013-2017 – Chapter 5*

SAEPF, FAO, GEF, *Evaluation of Agricultural and Forestry Policies of the Kyrgyz Republic on Sustainable Land Management and Forest Resources*

SAEPF, GEF, UNEP, CBD, *Fifth National Report on Conservation of Biodiversity of the Kyrgyz Republic*

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\_\_\_\_\_, *Promotion Guide Natural Renewal in Walnut Fruit Forests of Kyrgyzstan*

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## Annex 6: Interview Guide

*Note: This is a guide for the Reviewer (a simplified version of the review matrix). Not all questions were asked to each interviewee; it was a reminder for the interviewer about the type of information required to complete the review exercise and a guide to prepare the semi-structured interviews. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the interviewees and the findings once “triangulated” were incorporated in the report.*

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### **I. RELEVANCE** - *How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF, UNDP and of Kyrgyzstan to strengthen its capacity to manage land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation?*

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- I.1. Is the Project relevant to the GEF objectives?
- I.2. Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives?
- I.3. Is the Project relevant to Kyrgyzstan’s capacity to manage land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation?
- I.4. Does the Project address the needs of target beneficiaries?
- I.5. Is the Project internally coherent in its design?
- I.6. How is the Project relevant in light of other donors?

#### ***Future directions for similar projects***

- I.7. What lessons have been learnt and what changes could have been made to the project in order to strengthen the alignment between the project and the Partners’ priorities and areas of focus?
- I.8. How could the project better target and address priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries?

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### **II. EFFECTIVENESS** – *To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?*

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- II.1. How is the Project effective in achieving its expected outcomes?
  - Conservation and sustainable management of Key Biodiversity Areas within landscape
  - Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in Western Tian Shan are enhanced by regulating land and forest use in buffer zones and corridors and support to sustainable livelihoods
  - Strengthened national capacities for snow leopard conservation, promoting Kyrgyz regional and global cooperation, and setting the scene for up-scaling
- II.2. How is risk and risk mitigation being managed?

#### ***Future directions for similar projects***

- II.3. What lessons have been learnt for the project to achieve its outcomes?
- II.4. What changes could have been made (if any) to the formulation of the project in order to improve the achievement of project’s expected results?
- II.5. How could the project be more effective in achieving its results?

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### **III. EFFICIENCY** - *Was the project implemented efficiently, cost-effectively and in-line with international and national norms and standards?*

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- III.1. Is adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?
- III.2. Do the *Project Results Framework* and work plans and any changes made to them used as management tools during implementation?
- III.3. Are accounting and financial systems in place adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial information?
- III.4. How adequate is the M&E framework (indicators & targets)?
- III.5. Are progress reports produced accurately, timely and respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?
- III.6. Is project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual)?
- III.7. Is the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happening as planned?
- III.8. Are financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently?
- III.9. How is RBM used during project implementation?

- III.10. Are there an institutionalized or informal feedback or dissemination mechanism to ensure that findings, lessons learned and recommendations pertaining to project formulation and implementation effectiveness were shared among project stakeholders, UNDP Staff and other relevant organizations for ongoing project adjustment and improvement?
- III.11. Does the project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation?
- III.12. Is the government engaged?
- III.13. To what extent are partnerships/ linkages between institutions/ organizations encouraged and supported?
- III.14. Which partnerships/linkages are facilitated? Which one can be considered sustainable?
- III.15. What is the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? (between local actors, UNDP, and relevant government entities)
- III.16. Is an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise as well as local capacity?
- III.17. Did the project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the project?

***Future directions for the project***

- III.18. What lessons can be learnt from the project on efficiency?
- III.19. How could the project have more efficiently addressed its key priorities (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements, etc., ...)?

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**IV. IMPACTS** - *Are there indications that the project has contributed to improve the management of land and forest resources, including biodiversity conservation in Kyrgyzstan?*

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- IV.1. Will the project achieve its objective that is to promote a landscape approach to protection of internationally important biodiversity, and land and forest resources in the Western Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan?

***Future directions for the project***

- IV.2. How could the project build on its successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?

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**V. SUSTAINABILITY** - *To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?*

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- V.1. Were sustainability issues adequately integrated in project formulation?
- V.2. Does the project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues?
- V.3. Is there evidence that project partners will continue their activities beyond project support?
- V.4. Are laws, policies and frameworks being addressed through the project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms?
- V.5. Is the capacity in place at the national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of results achieved to date?
- V.6. Does the project contribute to key building blocks for social and political sustainability?
- V.7. Are project activities and results being replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up?
- V.8. What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of efforts?

***Future directions for the project***

- V.9. Which areas/arrangements under the project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results?
- V.10. What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed?

## Annex 7: Review Mission Agenda

### Itinerary for Mid-Term Review - TENTATIVE AGENDA

of the mission of Mr. Jean Joseph Bellamy, international consultant for the mid-term evaluation of the UNDP-GEF project “*Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods*”

July 15-23, 2019

#### Responsible from UNDP-GEF:

Mrs. Mirgul Amanalieva, UNDP-GEF Project coordinator. Phone: +996-770 112201 (mob), e-mail: [mirgul.amanalieva@undp.org](mailto:mirgul.amanalieva@undp.org)

Ms. Dildekan Kulumbetova, UNDP-GEF Projects Assistant. Phone: +996-312 394140 ext. 184 (w), +996- 770 112214 (mob), e-mail: [dildekan.kulumbetova@undp.org](mailto:dildekan.kulumbetova@undp.org)

Translator: Zarylbek Nishan uulu

\* Arrive in Bishkek on Sunday July 14th (rest day)

\* Start mission on Monday July 15th

\* Return to Ottawa on Wednesday July 24th

Time	Activity and participants	Venue, responsible person and contacts	Remarks/ Comments
<b>Sunday – July 14, 2019 (rest day)</b>			
	Arrival of the International Consultant	Manas airport and Accommodation in Silk Road Hotel	
<b>Day 1, Monday – July 15, 2019</b>			
09.30	Pick-up from the Hotel	Hotel UNDP car	
10.00-11.00	<b><i>Briefing with UNDP team</i></b>  Mr. Daniar Ibragimov, UNDP Team Leader on Environment and DRM Mrs.Mirgul Amanalieva UNDP-GEF Project Coordinator Ms. Sherbet Nurjanova, UNDP Associate Ms. Dildekan Kulumbetova, UNDP-GEF Projects Assistant	UNDP 6 <sup>th</sup> floor conference room Kievskay str., 195, 6 <sup>th</sup> floor, Bishkek	
11.00-12.00	<b><i>Presentation on Project activity</i></b> Mrs.Mirgul Amanalieva UNDP-GEF Project Coordinator	UNDP 6 <sup>th</sup> floor conference room	

Time	Activity and participants	Venue, responsible person and contacts	Remarks/ Comments
	Ms. Dildekan Kulumbetova, UNDP-GEF Projects Assistant	Kievskay str., 195, 6 <sup>th</sup> floor, Bishkek	
12.00-13.00	<b>Lunch</b>		
13.30-15.00	<b>Meeting with Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) project team, discussion of the join activities</b> Activity 1 – Financial solution for biodiversity and PAs; Activity 3 – Activities on Snow Leopard/ Biodiversity conservation  Mrs. Lira Zholdubaeva, Project Coordinator	UNDP 6 <sup>th</sup> floor conference room Kievskay str., 195, 6 <sup>th</sup> floor, Bishkek	
15.00 – 16.00	<b>Security briefing at UNDP</b> Mr. Bakit Bekibayev, UNDSS	UN House 160 Chui str., Bishkek	10 min to get place
16.00 - 18:00	<b>Meeting with gender team of UNDP and communication</b> Project results and impact assessment Ms. Bermet Ubaidulaeva, UNDP Specialist on gender issues Ainagul Abdrakhmanova, UNDP Communication officer	UNDP 6 <sup>th</sup> floor conference room Kievskay str., 195, 6 <sup>th</sup> floor, Bishkek	
<b>Day 2, Tuesday – July 16, 2019</b>			
9.10	Pick-up from the Hotel	Hotel UNDP car	
9.30 - 11.00	<b>Meeting with State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry</b>  Ms. Salykmambetova Baglan Nurstamovna, Head of International Cooperation Department Ms. Barieva Aizada Zhantaevna, Head of strategy and policy management department Mr. Musaev Almaz, Director of Department of the Biodiversity conservation and PAs	SAEPF office 142 Gorkii str., Bishkek	
11.00 - 12.00	<b>Meeting with the Department of the Biodiversity conservation and PAs</b> Mr. Musaev Almaz, Director of Department of the Biodiversity conservation and PAs	SAEPF office 142 Gorkii str., Bishkek	Talant, Abai, Kumar trainings and wild life monitoring activities etc.
12.00 - 13.00	<b>Lunch</b>		

Time	Activity and participants	Venue, responsible person and contacts	Remarks/ Comments
13.30 - 14.30	<b>Meeting with the Department of the Ecosystem Development and Forestry</b> Project results on HVCF, reforestation and planting activities in Ileshozes Mr. Jumaev Nurlan, Director of Department Mr. Yrsaliev Bakytbek, Deputy Director	SAEPF office 3 L.Tolstoy str., Bishkek	
14.30 – 15.30	<b>Meeting with Kyrgyzletohotusrtoistvo</b> Project results on inventory, zoning activities in PAs and new methodology Ms. Chukumbaev Sabyrbek, Director of the Department	SAEPF office 3 L.Tolstoy str., Bishkek	
16.00 – 17.00	<b>Meeting at the Ministry of Culture and Information, tourism</b> Mr. Maksat Damir uulu, Director of the Tourism Department	TBD	
<b>Day 3, Wednesday – July 17, 2019</b>			
9.00	Pick-up from the Hotel	Hotel UNDP car	
9.30 - 11.00	<b>Meeting with partners Irbis Foundation, Snow Leopard Trust, GSLEP Secretariat, Panthera, NABU</b> Mr. Zairbek Kubanychbekov, Irbis Foundation Mr. Kuvanysh Jumabai uulu, Snow Leopard Foundation Mr. Snow Leopard Trust, Koustubh Sharma Mr. Chyngyz Kochorov, GSLEP Secretariat Mr. Tolkunbek Asykulov NABU  <b>Meeting with University of Central Asia</b> Snow Leopard Conservation action plan development Ms. Maksim Kulikov	UNDP 6th floor conference room Kievskay str., 195, 6th floor, Bishkek	
11.00 - 12.00	<b>Meeting with FAO-GEF, WB – GEF, GIZ Projects</b> Partnership in forestry sector (Activity 1 and Activity 2) Mrs. Umut Zholdosheva, WB – GEF project coordinator Mrs. Cholpon Alibakieva, FAO – GEF project coordinator Mr. Marat Asanaliev, GIZ Project coordinator	UNDP 6th floor conference room Kievskay str., 195, 6th floor, Bishkek	
12.00 - 13.00	<b>Lunch</b>		
14.00 - 18.00	Departure to Toktogul region (with the stop for dinner on the way)	UNDP car	
<b>Day 4, Thursday – July 18, 2019</b>			

Time	Activity and participants	Venue, responsible person and contacts	Remarks/ Comments
08.00	Pick-up from the Hotel	Hotel UNDP car	
8.30 - 10.00	<i>Visit to Cholpon Ata ayil okmotu</i> <i>Meeting with project staff in Toktogul office</i> Mr. Taalaibek Amanov, Field Specialist, Component I Mr. Tolkunbek Kubatbekov, Field Specialist, Component II Mr. Sardar Momunaliev, NUNV	UNDP Project office	
10:30 – 12:00	<i>Meeting with the head of the region</i>		
12.00 - 13.00	<i>Lunch</i>		
14.00 - 19.00	<i>Meeting with local communities (heads of ayil okmotu, pasture committees, steering committee of PAs, etc .)</i>	UNDP car	
<b>Day 5, Friday – July 19, 2019</b>			
8.00 – 12.00	Pick-up from the Hotel <i>Visit to “Alatai” PA, Kara Suu lake</i>	Hotel UNDP car	
12.00 – 13.00	Field lunch	UNDP car	
13.00 - 18.00	Departure from Kara Suu lake to Jalal Abad city		
<b>Day 6, Saturday – July 20, 2019</b>			
08.00 – 13:00	Pick-up from the Hotel and departure to Toguz Toro rayon (with the stop for lunch on the way)	Hotel UNDP car	
13.00 – 18.00	Visit of Kok Irim ayil okmotu (esparcet territory) Visit of demonstration territory, park <i>Meeting with the head of the region</i> <i>Meeting with local communities (heads of ayil okmotu, pasture committees, steering committee of PAs, etc .)</i>	UNDP car	
<b>Day 7, Sunday – July 21, 2019</b>			
08.00 – 19.00	Departure to Bishkek (with the stop for lunch on the way)	UNDP car	
<b>Day 8, Monday – July 22, 2019</b>			

Time	Activity and participants	Venue, responsible person and contacts	Remarks/ Comments
9.00	Pick up from hotel	UNDP car	
9.30 - 10.30	<i>Meeting with the customs service, dog training department</i> Activity 3, illegal trade	UNDP 6 <sup>th</sup> floor conference room Kievskay str., 195, 6 <sup>th</sup> floor, Bishkek	
10.30 – 12.00	<i>Work with the project documents</i>	UNDP 6 <sup>th</sup> floor conference room Kievskay str., 195, 6 <sup>th</sup> floor, Bishkek	
12.00 – 13.00	<i>Lunch</i>		
13.00 – 18:00	<i>Meeting with partners on eco-education</i>	Hotel UNDP car	
<b>Day 9, Tuesday – July 23, 2019</b>			
09.00	Pick-up from the Hotel	Hotel UNDP car	
09.30 – 11.00	<i>Debriefing with State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry</i> <i>Department of the biodiversity and PAs</i> Mr. Rystamov Abdykalyk Alibekovich, Director of SAEPF Mr. Musaev Almaz, Director of Department of the Biodiversity conservation and PAs	SAEPF office 142 Gorkii str., Bishkek	
11:00 – 12:00	<i>Free time or any TBD meetings</i>		
12:00 – 13:00	<i>Lunch</i>		
14:00 – 15:30	<i>Debriefing with UNDP team-preliminary conclusions and recommendations (either as a brief power point or in a free-flowing conversation format.)</i> Ms. Aliona Niculita, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative Ms. Aidai Arstanbekova, UNDP Team Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Mr. Daniar Ibragimov, UNDP Team Leader on Environment and DRM Ms. Sherbet Nurjanova, UNDP Associate Mr. Mirgul Amanalieva, UNDP Project Coordinator Ms. Dildekan Kulumbetova, UNDP-GEF Projects Assistant	UNDP CO 160, Chui Str.	

Time	Activity and participants	Venue, responsible person and contacts	Remarks/ Comments
16.00 - 18.00	<i>Work on documents</i>	UNDP 6th floor conference room Kievskay str., 195, 6th floor, Bishkek	
<b>Day 10, Wednesday – July 24, 2019</b>			
	Departure of the International Consultant	Manas airport and Accommodation in Silk Road hotel	



## Annex 8: List of People Interviewed

### List of People met during MTR mission on 13-24 July 2019

Date	Time	Location	Participants
Day 1, Monday – July 15, 2019	9:30-12:00	UNDP Office	Ms. Mirgul Amanalieva UNDP-GEF Project Coordinator Ms. Sherbet Nurjanova, UNDP Associate Ms. Dildekan Kulumbetova, UNDP-GEF Projects Assistant Ms. Lira Zholdubaeva, Project Coordinator
	13:00-15:00	UNDP Office	Ms. Lira Zholdubaeva, Project Coordinator Mr. Temir Burzhubaev, BIOFIN specialist Ms. Dinara Turdumalieva, BIOFIN specialist
	15:00-16:00	UNDP Office	Ms. Bermet Ubaidillaeva, UNDP Specialist on gender issues Ms. Ainagul Abdrakhmanova, UNDP Communications Officer
Day 2, Tuesday – July 16, 2019	9:30 – 11:00	SAEPF office	Mr. Ryspekov Arsen Arzyevich, Deputy Director of SAEPF Ms. Salykmambetova Baglan Nurstamovna, Head of International Cooperation Department Mr. Musaev Almaz, Director of Department of the Biodiversity conservation and PAs
	11:00-12:00	SAEPF office	Mr. Musaev Almaz, Director of Department of the Biodiversity conservation and PAs Mr. Talant Turdumatov, Head of monitoring and science activity unit at the Department of the Biodiversity conservation and PAs Mr. Askarali Shaibylbaev, Deputy Director of Department of the Biodiversity conservation & PAs Ms. Emelianova Nadezhda, Monitoring and Science Specialist at the Department of the Biodiversity Conservation and PAs
	13:30-15:30	SAEPF office	Mr. Yrsaliev Bakytbek, Deputy Director Ms. Chukumbaev Sabyrbek, Director of the Kyrgyzlesohotoustroistvo Department
	15:00 – 16:00	UNDP CO	Mr. Bakit Bekibayev, UNDSS
	16:00 – 17:00	Ministry of culture	Mr. Maksat Damir uulu, Director of the Tourism Department
Day 3, Wednesday – July 17, 2019	9:30-11:00	UNDP Office	Mr. Zairbek Kubanychbekov, Irbis Foundation Mr. Kuvanysh Jumabai uulu, Snow Leopard Foundation Mr. Chyngyz Kochorov, GSLEP Secretariat

Date	Time	Location	Participants
			Mr. Mirlan Dyldaev, NABU Ms. Maksim Kulikov, UCA
	11:00-12:00	UNDP Office	Mrs. Umut Zholdosheva, WB – GEF project coordinator Mrs. Cholpon Alibakieva, FAO – GEF project coordinator
Day 4, Thursday – July 18, 2019	8:45-9:15	UNDP Toktogul Office	Mr. Taalaibek Amanov, Field Specialist, Component I Mr. Tolkunbek Kubatbekov, Field Specialist, Component II Mr. Sardar Momunaliev, NUNV
	9:15-9:40	Toktogul District State Administration	Mr. Taalaibek Zhayilov, Head-Akim of Local State Administration
	9:45-10:05	Office of Toktogul Leskhoz (forest unit)	Mr. Sarybek Bochoev, Forest Protection Engineer of Toktogul leskhoz
	10:10-11:40	Office of State Nature Park «Altay», Toktogul	Mr. Akylbek Tursunaliyev, Director of «Altay» State Natural Park
	13:00-13:30	Office of Cholpon-Ata ayil okmotu (village government), v.Cholpon-Ata	Mr. Anarbek Mambetov, Head of Cholpon-Ata ayil okmotu
	13:30-14:30	Office of Cholpon-Ata ayil okmotu, v.Cholpon-Ata	Mr. Esenkul Nusupov, Member of the Supervisory Board of State Nature Park “Alatai” Ms. Klara Sulpukarova, Member of the Supervisory Board of State Nature Park “Alatai” Ms. Gulshat Omorova, Member of the Supervisory Board of State Nature Park “Alatai” Mr. Zhoodar Chyppev Member of the Supervisory Board of State Nature Park “Alatai” Mr. Tursun Mamytbekov, representative of Pasture Committee of Cholpon-Ata ayil okmotu Mr. Mahratbek Berdigulov, representative of Pasture Committee of Kyzyl-Ozgorush ayil okmotu
	14:30-14:45	Museum named after Toktogul Satylganov, v.Cholpon-Ata	Visiting of the Museum named after Toktogul Satylganov
	16:30-17:10	State Nature Park “Alatai”, the site “Kol”	Mr. Kalybek Karagulov, ranger Mrs. Nurgul Omorova, ranger Mr. Kanimet Toktonaliyev freelance ranger Mr. Imangazy uulu Rayymbek, freelance ranger

Date	Time	Location	Participants
			Mr. Akim Kenzhebaev ranger Mr. Ernis Azambayev, forester
	19:00-19:20	The plot of local farmer Akmat Chalov (planting grapes), v.Ak-Tektir Cholpon-Ata ayil okmotu	Mr. Akmat Chalov, farmer-forester
Day 5, Friday – July 19, 2019	11:00-12:15	Kara-Suu lake – the territory of State Nature Park “Alatai”	Mr. Ulan Jalilov, ranger Mr. Nurzhigit Mambetaliev, ranger Mr. Tynchtykbek Kushubakov, ranger Mr. Kanimet Toktonaliev, freelance ranger
	17:00-17:30	Forest plantations of Aksy forestry, Tash-Komur sity	Mr. Kylychbek Sadykbaev, Forest Protection Engineer of Aksy leskhoz
Day 6. Saturday July 20, 2019	11:30-12:00	Toguz Toro rayon, Kok Irim ayil aimak, Kara Bulak territory	Mr. Kadyrbek Epeev – Head of Kok Irim ayil okmotu Mr. Kaparov Jeenkul – Chairperson of pasture committee of Kok Irim ayil okmotu
	12:20:12:50	Toguz Toro rayon, Atai village, demonstration site	Mr. Bobukeev Bakdoolot – Head of Atai ayil okmotu Асанов Mr. Mahmut – member of pasture committee of Atai ayil okmotu Ms. Baibagulova Nargiza – member of public union Ms. Dosmatova Narynkul – Deputy director of school named after Tasmatov Ms. Mametsmanova Nargiza – member of women union of Atai a/o
	14:00-15:30	Toguz Toro Local state administration	Mr. Imanberdiev Ulan – Deputy head of Toguz Toro local state administration Mr. Damir Tagaibek uulu – Head of forestry of Toguz Toro rayon Mr. Askar Baatyrbek uulu – Chief specialist of forestry of Toguz Toro rayon
	15:30-16:30	Тогуз-Тороузский райгосадминистрация Встреча членами общественного совета	Mr. Zhanai Musa uulu – Chairperson of supervisory board of “Kan Achuu” PA Ms. Perizat Kanbolot kyzy – Secretary of “Kan Achuu” PA Mr. Almaz Kalmanbetov – member of supervisory board of “Kan Achuu” PA Ms. Gulnara Omurbekova - member of supervisory board of “Kan Achuu” PA Ms. Kasiet Abdymalik kyzy - member of supervisory board of “Kan Achuu” PA Ms. Nargiza Baigulova - member of supervisory board of “Kan Achuu” PA Mr. Zheenjul Kaparov - member of supervisory board of “Kan Achuu” PA

Date	Time	Location	Participants
			Mr. Bakdoolot Bobukeev - member of supervisory board of “Kan Achuu” PA Mr. Kadyrbek Epeev - member of supervisory board of “Kan Achuu” PA
	16:30-17:30	State Nature Park “Kan Achuu”	Mr. Esenkanov Sabyrkanov – Director of “Kan Achuu” SNP Mr. Asylbekov Suimonkul – Chief forester Mr. Aitiev Mirbek – senior science specialist Mr. Satarov Zhanabil – forester Mr. Kambaraliev Ataibek - engineer Ms. Apeshova Nurzada – chief accountant Ms. Akmatbekova Aigerim – secretary Mr. Mamytov Baktybek – forester Mr. Arabekov Baktybek – ranger Mr. Kokumbaev Yurstom – forester Mr. Alymbekov Ayip – forester Mr. Bekbolot uulu Almaz – forester Mr. Borojev Ulanbek – ranger Mr. Torobekov Nurmat – forester Ms. Erkegul Aitmurza kyzy – freelance ranger Ms. Toktobek kyzy Nooruzgul – freelance ranger
	18:30-19:00		Mr. Moldobekov Ulukbek - former director of “Kan Achuu” SNP
	19:00-19:30		Ms. Zhenishova Altynai - UNV
Day 8, Monday – July 22, 2019	14:00-15:30	Custom Service, dog training department	Mr. Zairbek Kubanychbekov – Director of “Ilbirs” Foundation Mr. Evgenii Mashenko – Head of dog handlers department Mr. Dzheembekov Nurbek – Head of training center under the Customs service Mr. Esen Koichumanov – dog handler Ms. Elena Shabodaho – dog handler
	16:00-16:30		Mr. Daniyar Ibragimov, UNDP Program Officer/Analyst
Day 9, Tuesday – July 23, 2019	10:00-12:15	SAEPF office	Mr. Musaev Almaz, Director of Department of the Biodiversity conservation and PAs Ms. Aizada Barieva, Head of strategy and policy management department Ms. Salykmambetova Baglan Salykmambetova, Head of International Cooperation Department Mr. Nurlan Zhumaev, Director of Department of ecosystem development and forestry Mr. Chukumbaev Sabyrbek, Director of the Kyrgyzlesohotoustroistvo Department Ms. Emelianova Nadezhda, Specialist of monitoring and science activity unit at the Department of

Date	Time	Location	Participants
			biodiversity conservation and PAs Mr. Ryspekov Orunbek, Head of accounting unit, Department of biodiversity conservation and protected areas Mr. Aliev Mairambek, Department of ecosystem development and forestry Ms. Mirgul Amanalieva, WTS Project Coordinator Ms. Lira Zholdubaeva, BIOFIN Project Coordinator Mr. Zarylbek Nishan uulu, Translator Ms. Aidana Dooronova, UNDP volunteer Ms. Dildekan Kulumbetova, WTS Project assistant
	14:00-15:00	SAEPF office	Mr. Rystamov Abdykalyk Alibekovich, Director of SAEPPF
	15 :00-16:30	UNDP CO	Ms. Aidai Arstanbekova, UNDP Team Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Mr. Daniar Ibragimov, UNDP Team Leader on Environment and DRM Ms. Sherbet Nurjanova, UNDP Associate Mr. Mirgul Amanalieva, UNDP Project Coordinator Ms. Dildekan Kulumbetova, UNDP-GEF Projects Assistant Ms. Lira Zholdubaeva, Project Coordinator

*Met a total of 100 people (32 women and 68 men).*

## Annex 9: MTR Rating Scales

As per UNDP-GEF guidance, the MTR Reviewer used the following scales to rate the project:

- A 6-point scale to rate the project's progress towards the objective and each project outcome as well as the Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), or Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).
- A 4-point scale to rate the sustainability of project achievements: Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (MU), and Unlikely (U).

<b>Ratings for Progress Towards Results:</b> (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as "good practice".
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

<b>Ratings for Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management:</b> (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as "good practice".
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

<b>Ratings for Sustainability:</b> (one overall rating)		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project's closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

## **Annex 10: Audit Trail**

The audit trail is presented in a separate file.

## Annex 11: Evaluation Report Clearance Form

### EVALUATION REPORT CLEARANCE FORM

for the Mid-Term Evaluation Report of the UNDP-GEF-Government of Kyrgyzstan Project:  
*“Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of  
Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods”*  
(PIMS 5411)

*Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by*

#### ***UNDP Country Office***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***UNDP RTA***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_