



***“Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pamir Alay and Tien Shan Ecosystems for Snow Leopard Protection and Sustainable Community Livelihoods”***

**Tajikistan**



**Mid-Term Review FINAL Report**

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## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

APR	Annual Progress Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDR	Combined Delivery Report
CEP	Committee for Environmental Protection
CPD	Country Programme Document
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DO	Development Objective
GBAO	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographical Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
GSLEP	Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program
HDI	Human Development Index
IP	Implementation Progress
ITA	International Technical Advisor
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LD	Land Degradation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NAPCSL	National Action Plan for Conservation of Snow Leopard in Tajikistan
NBBC	National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NSLEP	National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection Priorities
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PD	Project Director
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PMAT	Portfolio Monitoring and Assessment Tool
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PUU	Pasture Users Union
RBM	Results Based Management
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SLIMS	Snow Leopard Information Management System
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound (indicator)
SMART	Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (Patrol)
SPNA	Special Protected Nature Area
TNP	Tajik National Park
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
USD	United States Dollar
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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## DISCLAIMER

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

## **Executive Summary**

This report presents the findings of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the UNDP-supported-GEF-Financed-Government of Tajikistan Project “*Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pamir Alay and Tien Shan Ecosystems for Snow Leopard Protection and Sustainable Community Livelihoods*”. This MTR was performed by an Independent Evaluation Team composed of Mr. Jean-Joseph Bellamy, Team Leader and Ms. Tahmina Akhmedova, National Evaluator on behalf of UNDP.

Tajikistan, the smallest of the Central Asian countries, is landlocked and shares its boundaries with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to the west and north, Afghanistan to the south, and China to the east. The topography of Tajikistan is characterized by the prominence of mountains and rivers. It includes the towering ranges of the Pamir and Tien Shan, containing peaks ranging from 1,300m - 7,495m. Much of Tajikistan falls within the Mountains of Central Asia biodiversity hotspot, one of Conservation International's 34 global biodiversity hotspots and one of WWFs Global 200 priority ecoregions for global conservation.

The total area of pastureland in Tajikistan used for livestock grazing is estimated at 3.9 million ha. Most of these pastures are located in hilly and mountainous areas above 2,000 m. Traditionally, pastures have formed the basis of Tajikistan's livestock sub-sector and have been utilized for centuries through an altitude - and season - based transhumance grazing system. With 410,000 ha (or less than 3%) of the country's territory covered by forests, Tajikistan currently has the lowest forest coverage in Central Asia. It is estimated that total forest cover has decreased about 15% over the last eight years. The remaining forests are concentrated in mountainous areas in the western part of the country.

The Special Protected Nature Areas (SPNAs) cover a total area of 3,116,440ha representing over 21% of the territory of Tajikistan; including the Tajik National Park with 2,611,674ha and which was also inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 2013. Approximately 75% of the country's snow leopard population have been recorded in these protected areas.

The total habitat of the snow leopard in Tajikistan – estimated at about 85,700 km<sup>2</sup> - is situated in the far west of the species distribution range. Tajikistan forms an important link between the southern and northern range populations of snow leopards, and serves as a vital corridor for the genetic interchange between these populations. The current population estimates for snow leopards in Tajikistan is around 220 individuals. The population of snow leopard prey species (Marco Polo sheep, ibex and markhor) are not fully monitored across the entire country but estimates suggests that the numbers of animals are declining rapidly.

Snow leopard, wild prey and their ecosystems face a variety of threats. They include the "expansion" of grazing areas into more remote mountains for growing livestock herds affecting forage availability for wild ungulates; consequently, over time, reducing wild prey numbers, increasing killing of domestic livestock by snow leopards and finally, killing of snow leopards by local communities as retaliatory killings and poaching.

Tajikistan drafted its *National Action Plan for Conservation of Snow Leopard in Tajikistan (NAPCSL)*, which identified national and local actions to effectively conserve snow leopard, wild prey and their ecosystems. However, there are a number of significant barriers to implement a long-term solution: (a) Limited resources for, and capabilities in, the planning and management of SPNAs; (b) Unsustainable land use management practices outside SPNAs; and (c) Incomplete information and knowledge management systems for management decision making and trans-boundary cooperation.

This project has been addressing these barriers. It focuses on four strategic areas: improve the conservation of protected areas; improve the sustainable management of pastures across the snow leopard range; improve the ecological integrity of forests in the snow leopard range; expand the reach of research, monitoring and planning efforts about snow leopard, their preys and their habitats. The project objective is the "*conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods*". It will be achieved through the delivery of three outcomes and 9 outputs:

1. Conservation and sustainable management of key biodiversity areas
2. Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in wider landscape outside protected areas
3. Support to international cooperation

**Table 1: Project Information Table**

<b>Project Title:</b>	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pamir Alay and Tien Shan Ecosystems for Snow Leopard Protection and Sustainable Community Livelihoods.		
<b>UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):</b>	5437	<b>PIF Approval Date:</b>	October 20, 2014
<b>GEF Project ID (PMIS #):</b>	6949	<b>CEO Endorsement Date:</b>	May 13, 2016
<b>Award ID:</b>	00085264	<b>Project Document (ProDoc) Signature Date (date project began):</b>	August 3, 2016
<b>Country(ies):</b>	Tajikistan	<b>Date project manager hired:</b>	August 9, 2016
<b>Region:</b>	CIS	<b>Inception Workshop date:</b>	November 4, 2016
<b>Focal Area:</b>	Biodiversity	<b>Midterm Review date:</b>	Nov. 2019 – Jan. 2020
<b>GEF-6 Strategic Programs:</b>	BD-1, BD-2 & BD-4 LD-3 SFM-1, SFM-2 & SFM-3	<b>Planned closing date:</b>	August 2, 2021
<b>Trust Fund:</b>	GEF-6	<b>If revised, proposed closing date:</b>	n/a
<b>Executing Agency:</b>	National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre (NBBC)		
<b>Other Execution Partners:</b>			
<b>Project Financing</b>	at CEO endorsement (USD)		at Midterm Review (USD)
<b>(1) GEF financing:</b>	4,181,370		4,181,370
<b>(2) UNDP contribution:</b>	6,410,000		6,410,000
<b>(3) Government:</b>	11,200,000		11,200,000
<b>(4) Others:</b>	2,000,000		2,000,000
<b>(5) Total co-financing [2+3+4]:</b>	19,610,000		19,610,000
<b>Project Total Cost [1+5]:</b>	23,791,370		23,791,370

This mid-term review report documents the achievements of the project and includes four chapters. Chapter 1 presents 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 and 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 Tajikistan:** The project is well aligned with national priorities as well as with UNDP and GEF-6 focal areas strategies. Currently, it is a key programming instrument to implement its draft *National Action Plan for Conservation of Snow Leopard in Tajikistan* (NAPCSL). It is a direct response to national priorities by: (i) preventing the further fragmentation of snow leopard and prey landscapes in Tajikistan; (ii) maintaining and/or restoring the quality of key snow leopard and prey habitats within these landscapes; (iii) improving the conservation status, and sustainability of pasture and forest use, in these key snow leopard and prey habitats; and (iv) reducing the direct threats to the survival of snow leopards and prey populations living in these key habitats.

**b) A complex ambitious project but well documented in the project document that is used as a “blue-print”:** It is an ambitious project with a broad scope and covering large geographical areas, but well formulated and well documented in the project document. The project strategy presents an articulated set of expected results with a good logical “chain of results”: activities → outputs → outcomes → objective. This document has been very useful for the project implementation team; it is used as a “blue-print” by the team.

### **Progress Towards Results**

**c) The progress made by the project so far is satisfactory:** The implementation adheres to the project strategy detailed in the project document. Overall, the project has made good progress under its three

components/outcomes and it has 21 more months of implementation. It is expected that the project should be completed by its end. Progress highlights under each outcome include:

- *Under Outcome 1* the project has been focusing on strengthening the capacity to manage protected areas. Regarding the Sangvor section, the project supported the process to officialize this area as part of the TNP. The project also supported the installation of four checkpoints at the entrance of the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections. It also provided some equipment such as cars and motorcycles as well as horses, donkeys and GPS in some areas. The project supported the organization of workshops on smart patrol system and snow leopard ecosystems monitoring in protected areas. Finally, under this component, the project supported the development of a concept (policy) for wildlife monitoring.
- *Under Outcome 2* the project has focused on the resilience of ecosystems and the connectivity of habitats in wider landscape outside protected areas. In collaboration with livestock owners, the project has been seeking to reduce the number of days of high-altitude summer pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas by providing hay (fodder) and gas balloons/cooking facilities to pastoralists/shepherds to reduce pressure (deforestation and overgrazing) on these ecosystems. Awareness raising activities took place through workshops, and a programme aired on national TV. It has also included activities to increase the productivity of these areas by planting forage crops for livestock to rehabilitate degraded pastures; and to monitor palatable and edible species for ungulates and livestock available in these types of pastures. So far, the project has supported the establishment of 3 Pasture User Unions (PUUs), and each one has prepared its own pasture management plan. The project has also involved local communities in sustainable pasture management, fuel and energy technologies and in piloting community rangers with the provision of technical assistance and grant funding. Finally, the project has provided equipment to support the rehabilitation of high-altitude pastures and forests.
- *Under Outcome 3* the project has been supporting the development of a Snow Leopard Information Management System (SLIMS) to monitor the population of snow leopards and their prey species in protected areas; as well as the standardization and methodology for monitoring the population of snow leopards. The project also supported the purchase and installation of camera traps in multiple protected areas to monitor the population of snow leopard and their preys. The project also promoted an ecotourism route "*In the Footsteps of Snow Leopard*" to contribute to improving the livelihood of local communities. The project also contributed to the drafting of the National Action Plan for Conservation of Snow Leopard in Tajikistan (NAPCSL). Based on this action plan, activities aimed at monitoring and assessment of high-altitude ecosystems, training on patrolling and data collection were completed and reported during Snow Leopard Conservation Committee meetings. Finally, the project has also been involved in drafting a Memorandum and Action Plan on joint actions for the conservation of snow leopards' landscapes in Western Tien Shan and Pamir Alay (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan).

**d) The project strategy should have a positive impact on the conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan snow leopard ecosystems; but the challenge of integrating all project interventions remains:** As a result of project activities, Tajikistan will be better equipped with management skills and tools to better manage its high-mountain protected areas, including a greater patrolling capacity of Rangers to protect and conserve these areas, and capacity to monitor illegal hunting and poaching. It should also be better equipped with skills, knowledge and equipment to manage and monitor high-altitude mountain pastures and forest, while sustaining livelihood of local communities, and finally relevant institutions should be better equipped to monitor and manage the information on the population of snow leopards and their preys as well as to have a transboundary programming framework for the conservation of snow leopard landscapes. The remaining challenge is to bring all project interventions together and demonstrate how to improve the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in this type of ecosystems.

**e) The progress made to develop the required capacities may not be enough to be sustained over the long-term:** Project activities have strengthened the management of protected areas and overall have developed capacities to conserve and manage high-altitude mountain ecosystems. Achievements such as the change of status of the Sangvor section; or the development of the NAPCSL once approved by the government, should be sustained over the long-term. They are becoming part of the instruments to manage, monitor and surveil the natural capital in Tajikistan. However, the sustainability of activities implemented to raise skills and knowledge of staff, as well as strengthening organizational processes and systems of relevant institutions are

less likely. Will developed capacities be enough to sustain new approaches to conserve and manage high-mountain ecosystems and produce a lasting positive change in biodiversity conservation and in illegal wildlife trade?

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

**f) The management arrangements are conducive for a good implementation of the project:** The project is implemented by a good technical team of professionals supported by national consultants/experts bringing together a broad range of skills and knowledge in protected area management, pasture and forestry management, biodiversity conservation, and local livelihood. Additionally, the fact that the PMU is based at NBBC is also an incentive for developing a good national ownership of the project and its achievements.

**g) The project enjoys a good engagement of stakeholders but a greater communication on project progress and results is needed:** The participative and collaborative approach used by the project implementation team has been conducive for a good engagement of stakeholders. As a result, the project collaborates with an extended list of stakeholders. However, in order to strengthen this engagement, the project would need to increase the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned among stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, to spread more evenly the knowledge accumulated by the project over time.

**h) The disbursements of the GEF grant is slower than the project elapsed time and the full grant may not be expended by August 2021:** As of end of October 2019, total expenditures amount to about USD 1.8M representing about 43% of the GEF grant versus an elapsed time of 65% (39 months out of 60). It has a remaining budget from the GEF grant of USD 2,389,943 for the remaining period of implementation. It is doubtful that the entire budget will be expended by August 2021. From an average monthly disbursement of USD 45,934 so far, the project would need to reach an average monthly disbursement to USD 113,807 (2.5 times) 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.

**i) The co-financing amount committed at the outset need to be better monitored:** Co-financing commitments at the outset of the project totaled USD 19,610,000, which represented about 82% 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 to the project on these 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.

**j) The monitoring framework in place is workable and it is used annually to report progress made by the project:** Most indicators are specific enough, measurable, attainable and time bound. However, most of these quantitative indicators do not measure well the degree of capacities being developed rendering the set of indicators and targets not fully relevant. Nevertheless, 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 M&E framework to annually report progress made by the project.

**k) Communication activities and knowledge management are excellent and provide a good visibility of the project at national/regional/local levels and contribute to raising awareness of local communities:** The project has produced and disseminated a broad range of communication products and activities including brochures, newsletters, factsheets, posters, presentations, etc., rendering the project visible. It also includes radio and TV programmes on snow leopard and their habitat/ecosystems, focusing on raising public awareness on the importance of these ecosystems. These TV programmes are highly rated by local communities in raising awareness on the importance of these ecosystems and their sustainable use. They seem to have “*strike a chord*”, particularly with local communities in high-mountain areas in Tajikistan. Traditionally, the snow leopard is a natural symbol and pride of Tajikistan and these TV programmes have been a reminder of the importance of snow leopard within these ecosystems but also in the local culture of these communities.

#### ***Sustainability***

**l) Project achievements should be sustained over the long-term:** 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 financial risk. Due to limited government resources

allocated to the management and conservation of the protected area system in Tajikistan, the project entered into an agreement with the forestry department to finance salaries of some Rangers on a 50/50 basis to secure the implementation of project activities in protected areas. The project also supported the procurement of equipment for Rangers to facilitate their fieldwork and better monitor and surveil fauna and flora. Once the project will end, financial resources will be needed to keep the Rangers employed, to maintain the equipment and at times to replace it. The Forestry Department will also need to support systems such as the Snow Leopard Monitoring and Reporting system, the SLIMS and the SMART patrol system and ultimately the implementation of conservation and rehabilitation measures. Considering the commitment of the government to the snow leopard conservation, it is expected that the government will continue to support the achievements with the necessary financial resources from the national budget and possibly from other funding sources.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this mid-term review, the following recommendations are suggested. The full details for each recommendation is presented in Section 4.2 of this report.

**Recommendation 1:** To conduct capacity assessments and allocate project resources were needed to address capacity gaps and consolidate capacities during the remaining implementation period of the project.

**Recommendation 2:** To increase the communications among stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, in order to improve the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned and disseminate more evenly the knowledge accumulated by the project.

**Recommendation 3:** To review/expand the micro-grant programme with a greater focus on alternative sources of income (honey, medicinal herbs, ....); particularly with involvement of women, and including collaboration/coordination with the SGP - *Big Cat Conservation* programme and possibly other similar initiatives.

**Recommendation 4:** To explore the possibility to open an office in Khorog with one Project Officer based in Khorog. It would provide a local presence of the project and would increase its adaptability to respond to evolving local needs and lead to more project activities in the area and subsequently more results over time.

**Recommendation 5:** To review/assess the TV programmes supported by the project and expand the broadcast during the remaining period of the project. These programmes seem to have “*strike a chord*”, particularly with local communities in high-mountain ecosystems in Tajikistan.

**Recommendation 6:** To undertake a socio-economic valuation study of high-mountain ecosystems. It would provide a basis to explore the potential for investing in the protection and conservation of these ecosystems, including increasing the relevant government budget allocations.

**Recommendation 7:** To provide uniforms to all Rangers in organizations collaborating with the project.

**Recommendation 8:** To develop an exit strategy for the project to facilitate the transition at the end of the project, identifying what, when, where and how much some activities need to be continued.

**Recommendation 9:** 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 August 2021.

**Recommendation 10:** To monitor project management expenditures in order to keep them aligned with the allocated budget of 4.8% of the total GEF grant.

**Recommendation 11:** To review co-financing commitments and request yearly estimates from Partners of the project.

**Recommendation 12:** To increase coordination between snow leopard projects in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan to exchange best practices and lessons learned.

## **Lessons Learned**

Several lessons learned are presented below:

- A TV programme based on the use of a natural symbol and pride of a country such as snow leopard for Tajikistan, can be a very powerful tool to raise awareness of communities on the importance of protecting and conserving this natural symbol.
- Organizing a festival on the need to protect and conserve snow leopard in the traditional landscape of this natural symbol for the Tajik people is a very effective way to raise awareness.
- Engaging women in protecting and conserving biodiversity is an effective approach to empower women. It provides women leadership than other women and girls can look up to, and inspires women and girls to be active in their communities.
- 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.
- 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.
- Implementation through government entities as custodians of project achievements is conducive to good long-term sustainability.
- A micro-grant programme needs to include a focus on alternative biodiversity-friendly sources of income aiming at increasing the livelihood of local communities to be effective.
- Sustainability of this type of projects, is much correlated with capacities being developed during the lifetime of these projects.
- An implementation approach through government entities, which become 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>Progress Towards Results</b>		
Objective Achievement:	S	The objective is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
Outcome 1 Achievement:	S	The outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
Outcome 2 Achievement:	S	The outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
Outcome 3 Achievement:	S	The outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management</b>	S	Implementation of most of the seven components: (i) management arrangements, (ii) work planning, (iii) finance and co-finance, (iv) project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, (v) stakeholder engagement, (vi) reporting, and (vii) communications are leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial actions.
<b>Sustainability</b>	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

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

1. Tajikistan, the smallest of the Central Asian countries, is landlocked and shares its boundaries with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to the west and north, Afghanistan to the south, and China to the east. The topography of Tajikistan is characterized by the prominence of mountains and rivers. It includes the towering ranges of the Pamir and Tien Shan, containing peaks ranging from 1,300 m - 7,495 m and the Pamirs are the source of several torrential rivers that have carved out gorges and canyons. Much of Tajikistan falls within the Mountains of Central Asia biodiversity hotspot, one of Conservation International's 34 global biodiversity hotspots and one of WWFs Global 200 priority ecoregions for global conservation.
2. Tajikistan, with a population of about 8.2 million, is not a densely populated country. The population density varies significantly due to the mountainous geography. More than 70% of the population live in rural areas. Tajikistan's HDI value for 2012 is 0.622, positioning the country at 125 out of 187 countries and territories (UNDP-HDR 2013). The Tajik agricultural sector is responsible for over 46% of total employment and 21% of GDP.
3. There is no private legal ownership of land in Tajikistan, as land and other natural resources are owned exclusively by the government, which is responsible for their effective use. The Land Code (1996, as amended) sets forth several tenure options for agricultural land, distinguishing primary use rights from secondary use rights. Primary use rights include: (i) perpetual use; (ii) limited or fixed-term use; and (iii) life-long inheritable tenure. The only secondary use-right established in the Land Code is the right to lease in which a primary rights holder may lease out their plots for a term not exceeding 20 years.
4. The total area of pastureland in Tajikistan - including grasslands, alpine meadows, woodlands and wetlands - used for livestock grazing is estimated at 3.9 million ha. Most of these pastures are located in hilly and mountainous areas above 2,000 m. Traditionally, pastures have formed the basis of Tajikistan's livestock sub-sector and have been utilized for centuries through an altitude - and season - based transhumance grazing system. With 410,000 ha (or less than 3%) of the country's territory covered by forests, Tajikistan currently has the lowest forest coverage in Central Asia. It is estimated that total forest cover has decreased about 15% over the last eight years. The remaining forests are concentrated in mountainous areas in the western part of the country.
5. The legislated Special Protected Nature Areas (SPNAs), including Wilderness Areas, National Parks, Special Nature Reserves and 26 Natural Monuments (IUCN Category V/VI), cover a total area of 3,116,440 ha representing over 21% of the territory of Tajikistan. About 2.6 million ha of the network of SPNAs is represented by a single SPNA, the Tajik National Park (2,611,674 ha), which encompasses almost the entire Pamir Mountains, and which was also inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 2013. Approximately 75% of the country's snow leopard population have been recorded in the SPNAs.
6. Snow leopards occupy high mountains of twelve countries in central and southern Asia, covering an area of 1.7 million km<sup>2</sup>. The global snow leopard population is estimated to be between 3,900 and 6,400 individuals. Snow leopards generally occur between elevations of 2,500-4,500 m, but are also found at lower elevations (900-1,500 m) and may range up to 5,800m. In most of their range, snow leopards favor steep, rugged terrain, well broken by cliffs, ridges, gullies, and rocky outcrops. They show a strong preference for steep irregular slopes (in excess of 40°) and well-defined landform edges, such as ridgelines, bluffs and ravines, along which to travel about their home range. They may migrate to lower elevations during the winter to avoid deep snow and follow movements of their primary prey species. The snow leopard is listed under Appendix I (i.e. species threatened with extinction) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). It is also listed under Appendix I of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and was later elevated to 'requiring Concerted Action' in 2002 (Resolution 7.1). It is also listed as Endangered in the IUCN red list.
7. Situated in the far west of the species distribution range, the total habitat of the snow leopard in Tajikistan is reported to be about 85,700 km<sup>2</sup> (*see map of Snow Leopard Landscapes in Annex 1*). Tajikistan

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

forms an important link between the southern and northern range populations of snow leopards, and serves as a vital corridor for the genetic interchange between these populations. Although no precise population estimate is available for the country, the current population estimates for snow leopards is around 220 individuals - significantly lower than the approximately 1,000 individuals prior to the 1980's. The population densities of most snow leopard prey species (Marco Polo sheep, ibex and markhor) are not fully monitored across the entire country but available information for ungulate prey species suggests that the numbers of animals are declining rapidly.

8. Snow leopard, wild prey and their ecosystems face a variety of direct and indirect threats that vary in intensity and prominence. They include the "expansion" of grazing areas into more remote mountains for growing livestock herds affecting forage availability for wild ungulates; consequently, over time, reducing wild prey numbers, increasing killing of domestic livestock by snow leopards and finally, killing of snow leopards by local communities as retaliatory killings and poaching.

9. The Government of Tajikistan is a party to The Bishkek Declaration on the Conservation of Snow Leopards (2012). Within the framework of the '*Bishkek Declaration*', the *Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP, 2013)* seeks to bring together governments of snow leopard range countries to collectively recognize the threats to snow leopards, and commit to coordinated national and international action. The foundation of the GSLEP is a set of *12 National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Priorities (NSLEP)* developed by each range country government.

10. Although the *National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection (NSLEP)* portfolio for Tajikistan and the draft *National Action Plan for Conservation of Snow Leopard in Tajikistan (NAPCSL)* identified a suite of national and local actions that would be required to effectively conserve snow leopard, wild prey and their ecosystems in Tajikistan, there are however a number of significant barriers to the country's ability to contribute to achieving the long-term solution. They include: (a) Limited resources for, and capabilities in, the planning and management of SPNs; (b) Unsustainable land use management practices outside the SPNs; and (c) Incomplete information and knowledge management systems for management decision making and trans-boundary cooperation.

11. This project directly supports the implementation of priority actions contained in the NSLEP for Tajikistan and address the existing barriers. The project seeks to: (i) prevent the further fragmentation of snow leopard and prey landscapes in Tajikistan; (ii) maintain and/or restore the quality of key snow leopard and prey habitats within these landscapes; (iii) improve the conservation status of, and sustainability of pasture and forest use in, these key snow leopard and prey habitats; and (iv) reduce the direct threats to the survival of snow leopards and prey populations living in these key habitats.

12. The project strategy is focused around four strategic areas: improve the conservation of protected areas; improve the sustainable management of pastures across the snow leopard range; improve the ecological integrity of forests in the snow leopard range; expand the reach of research, monitoring and planning efforts about snow leopard, snow leopard prey and their habitats. The project objective is "***Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods.***" It will be achieved through the delivery of three components and 9 outputs (*see more detailed about the project strategy in Annex 2*):

4. Conservation and sustainable management of key biodiversity areas
5. Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in wider landscape outside protected areas
6. Support to international cooperation

13. This is a project supported by UNDP, the GEF, and the Government of Tajikistan. It is funded by a grant from the GEF of USD 4,181,370 and a total co-financing of USD 19,610,000; including a cash contribution from UNDP (TRAC) of USD 410,000 and parallel financing of USD 6,000,000, a contribution from the national government (National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre (NBBC)) of USD 10,000,000, a contribution from the local government of USD 1,200,000 and others of USD 2,000,000. The total financing of the project is USD 23,791,370. The project was approved by GEF on May 13, 2016; it started in June 2016; the inception workshop was held on November 4, 2016; and the project duration is 5 years to be completed by May 2021. It is implemented under the "*National Implementation Modality (NIM)*". The implementing partner is the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre (NBBC).

## **2. REVIEW FRAMEWORK**

14. This mid-term review (MTR) - a requirement of UNDP and GEF procedures - has been initiated by UNDP Tajikistan, 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**

15. The objective of the MTR was to assess progress towards the achievement of the project objective 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 strategy and its risks to sustainability.

### **2.2. Scope**

16. As indicated in the TORs for this MTR (*see Annex 3*), 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:**

- Review of the Project Design
- Review of the Results Framework/Log-frame

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

- Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis

- Reporting
- Communications
- Risk Management
- Safeguard and Gender Mainstreaming

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

- Management Arrangements
- Work Planning
- Finance and co-finance
- Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems
- Stakeholder Engagement

#### **D. Sustainability**

- Review risks and risk ratings
- Assess risks to sustainability in term of financial risks, socio-economic risks, institutional framework and governance risks, and environmental risks.

### **2.3. Methodology**

17. 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**

18. 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 objective and outcomes and promoted learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the project’s partners and beyond.

19. The evaluation adopted an *Utilization Focused Evaluation (UFE)* approach, which is predicated on maximizing the practical value of the evaluation to project stakeholders. The MTR was planned and conducted in ways that enhanced the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions and improve performance of the project. Using this approach, the Evaluation Team did not make decisions independently of the intended users, but they rather facilitated decision making amongst the people who will

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

use the findings of this mid-term review.

20. The Evaluation Team developed gender sensitive review tools in accordance with UNDP and GEF policies and guidelines to 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 (objective/long term results) are likely to continue after the project ends.

21. In addition to the UNDP and GEF guidance for reviewing projects, the Evaluation Team applied to this mandate its knowledge of review methodologies and approaches and its expertise in biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihood, land and forest management and more generally in environmental management issues. It 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.

22. 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 Tajikstan</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>

23. Finally, the Evaluation Team signed and applied the “*Code of Conduct*” for Review Consultants (*see Annex 4*). The Evaluation Team conducted review activities, which were *independent, impartial* and *rigorous*. This MTR clearly contributed to learning and accountability and the Evaluation Team has personal and professional integrity and was guided by propriety in the conduct of its business.

### **2.3.2. Review Instruments**

24. 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. To conduct the review the following review instruments were used:

**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 5*). 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 Evaluation Team conducted a documentation review in Canada and in Tajikistan (*see Annex 6*). In addition to be a main source of information, documents were also used to prepare the fact-findings mission in Tajikistan. 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 7*) to solicit information from stakeholders. As part of the participatory approach, the Evaluation Team ensured that all parties viewed this tool as balanced, unbiased, and structured.

**Mission Agenda:** An agenda for the fact-findings mission of the Evaluation Team in Tajikistan was developed during the preparatory phase (*see Annex 8*). 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 9*). 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 fact-finding mission of the Evaluation Team in Tajikistan. It ensured that the Evaluation Team had direct primary sources of information from the field and project end-users (beneficiaries). It gave opportunities to the Evaluation Team to observe project achievements and obtain views from stakeholders and beneficiaries at the regional and local levels.

**Achievement Rating:** The Evaluation Team rated achievements according to the guidance provided in the TORs. It included a 6-point rating scale to measure progress towards results, project implementation and adaptive management and a four-point rating scale for sustainability (*see Annex 10*).

## **2.4. MTR Users**

25. This MTR, initiated by UNDP Tajikistan, provides Project Implementing Partner Managers at national, regional and local levels and UNDP-Tajikistan with an in-depth review of how well the project is progressing and – as needed – recommendations to correct and adjust the overall project strategy, work plan and timetable for the purpose of enhancing the achievement of project objective and outcomes. It also provides the basis for learning and accountability for these managers.

## **2.5. Limitations and Constraints**

26. The approach for this mid-term review was based on a planned level of effort of 50 days. It comprised a two-week fact-finding mission to Tajikistan to interview key stakeholders, collect evaluative evidence; including visits to project sites. Within the context of these resources, the Independent Evaluation Team 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 Evaluation Team 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**

27. 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**

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

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

29. Snow leopards occupy high mountains of twelve countries in central and southern Asia, covering an area of 1.7 million km<sup>2</sup>. The total habitat of snow leopards in Tajikistan was reported in the project document to be about 85,700 km<sup>2</sup> which represent about 60% of the total area of the country. Situated in the far west of the species distribution range, the Snow Leopard landscape in Tajikistan forms an important link between the southern and northern range populations of snow leopards, and serves as a vital corridor for the genetic interchange between these populations. Although no precise population estimate is available for the country, the current population estimates for snow leopards is around 220 individuals - significantly lower than the approximately 1,000 individuals prior to the 1980's<sup>3</sup>. The population densities of most snow leopard prey species (Marco Polo sheep, ibex and markhor) are not fully monitored across the entire country but available information for ungulate prey species suggests that the numbers of animals are declining rapidly.

30. Snow leopards generally occur between elevations of 2,500-4,500 m, but are also found at lower elevations (900-1,500 m) and may range up to 5,800m. In most of their range, snow leopards favor steep, rugged terrain, well broken by cliffs, ridges, gullies, and rocky outcrops. They show a strong preference for steep irregular slopes and well-defined landform edges, such as ridgelines, bluffs and ravines, along which to travel about their home range. They may migrate to lower elevations during the winter to avoid deep snow and follow movements of their primary prey species. The snow leopard is listed under Appendix I (i.e. species threatened with extinction) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). It is also listed under Appendix I of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and was later elevated to 'requiring Concerted Action' in 2002 (Resolution 7.1). It is also listed as Endangered in the IUCN red list.

31. Snow leopard, wild prey and their ecosystems face a variety of direct and indirect threats that vary in intensity and prominence. According to the *Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP, 2013)* the threats to snow leopards, their preys and ecosystems include: (i) Livestock-based livelihoods that impact prey species and sometimes lead to retaliatory or protective killing of snow leopards; (ii) With lower prey numbers, snow leopards may turn more often to killing domestic livestock; (iii) Habitat fragmentation and degradation, especially the growth of habitations and infrastructure in the landscape; (iv) Illegal trade and poor enforcement due to remote landscapes; (v) Lack of awareness and outreach; (vi) Weak transboundary cooperation; (vii) Limited human and financial capacity for conservation and weak conservation policies and institutions; (viii) Inadequate research and monitoring.

32. The Government of Tajikistan is a party to The Bishkek Declaration on the Conservation of Snow Leopards (2012). Within the framework of the '*Bishkek Declaration*', the *Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP, 2013)* seeks to bring together governments of snow leopard range countries to collectively recognize the threats to snow leopards, and commit to coordinated national and international action. The foundation of the GSLEP is a set of 12 *National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Priorities (NSLEP)* developed by each range country government. They include priorities in nine areas: (1) Engaging Local Communities and Reducing Human-Wildlife Conflict; (2) Controlling Poaching of Snow Leopards and Prey; (3) Managing Habitat & Prey; (4) Strengthening Capacity of National & Local Institutions; (5) Transboundary Management and Enforcement; (6) Addressing Knowledge Gaps through Research & Monitoring; (7) Strengthening Policies and Institutions; (8) Engaging Industry; and (9) Awareness and Communication.

3 The global snow leopard population is estimated to be between 3,900 and 6,400 individuals.

33. Based on the GSLEP-2013 framework, the *National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Priorities (NSLEP – 2014-2020)* for Tajikistan and the draft *National Action Plan for Conservation of Snow Leopard in Tajikistan (NAPCSL)* identified a suite of national and local actions that would be required to effectively conserve snow leopard, wild prey and their ecosystems in Tajikistan. However, the analysis conducted for the formulation of the project found that there are a number of significant barriers to the country's ability to contribute to achieving the long-term solution. They include: (a) Limited resources for, and capabilities in, the planning and management of SPNAs; (b) Unsustainable land use management practices outside the SPNAs; and (c) Incomplete information and knowledge management systems for management decision making and trans-boundary cooperation.

34. This project directly supports the implementation of priority actions contained in the NSLEP for Tajikistan and address the existing barriers. The project seeks to: (i) prevent the further fragmentation of snow leopard and prey landscapes in Tajikistan; (ii) maintain and/or restore the quality of key snow leopard and prey habitats within these landscapes; (iii) improve the conservation status of, and sustainability of pasture and forest use in, these key snow leopard and prey habitats; and (iv) reduce the direct threats to the survival of snow leopards and prey populations living in these key habitats.

35. Within this context, the project is fully relevant for Tajikistan, supporting the government to further develop its capacity to implement a landscape conservation and management approach to conserve and sustainably use the Pamir Alay and Tien Shan ecosystems resources for the protection of snow leopards and the sustainability of community livelihoods. The project is also well aligned with several governmental instruments:

#### ***National Development Strategy (NDS) for the Period of up to 2030***

36. The NDS to 2030 is a follow up to the NDS to 2015 which focused on public administration reform; private sector development and investment raising; and human development. This NDS takes into consideration the international commitments made by Tajikistan, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda and addresses the national priorities identified through national consultations on SDGs. They include priorities in the following areas: (1) education; (2) health care; (3) employment; (4) inequality; (5) combating corruption; (6) food security and nutrition; (7) good governance; (8) social welfare; (9) prevention of potential conflicts; and (10) energy security, environmental protection and management of demographic processes. This strategy serves as an overall action plan for all state bodies but also for the private sector and civil society as well as a guiding strategy for Development Partners.

37. The goal of the NDS is to improve the standards of living of the population based on sustainable economic development. It is to be achieved through strategic development objectives, which include a) Ensure energy security and efficient use of electricity; b) Exit from communication dead end and turn country into a transit country; c) Ensure food security and people's access to good quality nutrition; and d) Expand productive employment. Within this strategy, national environmental priorities are to be addressed under the development of human capital, by contributing to improving public health and extension of life expectancy. It includes a focus on natural disaster risk reduction and management, water conservation and management, domestic energy, nature protection – including a greater focus on biodiversity research, as well as climate change adaptation.

38. The NDS is the overarching development strategy for Tajikistan. As per its stated goal, it focuses mostly on social and economic development. Nevertheless, it also includes several national priorities in the environmental area. The most direct link with this project is through actions to sustain community livelihoods.

#### ***Environmental Legislation and Regulations including the Law on Pastures and State Programmes***

39. Over the years, the government of Tajikistan has developed an adequate environmental legislative framework to protect and conserve biodiversity. As noted in the *Sixth National Report for the Convention on Biological Diversity (August 2019)*, “*the government of the country made tremendous efforts to preserve biodiversity and promote rational use of biodiversity at all state levels, both within the specially protected natural areas and in natural forest, meadow, steppe, wetland, desert and high-desert ecosystems*”. However, as noted in the review of the NDS above and in the same report, “*unfortunately, it should be noted that socio-*

*economic conditions and population growth rate prevail over environmental protection measures and initiatives”.*

40. Nevertheless, according to this report, the government of Tajikistan has been promoting biodiversity values and mainstreaming biodiversity into national sectorial and cross-sectoral strategies, plans and programmes. Furthermore, legislative work has been undertaken to regulate the country's biodiversity; to strengthen existing laws and by-laws; and to introduce taxes and fines for illicit exploitation of vegetation, rare and endangered plants and animal species listed in the Red Book of Tajikistan. In addition to the legislation and state programmes listed in the project document (Table 2 and table 3 in Part I), the Evaluation Team noted the following more recent and relevant pieces of legislation and state programmes for the project:

- Law on Pastures (No. 1618, June 20, 2019). This law completely replaces the 2013 Law on Pastures. It legislates boundaries of pastures, uses of pastures, management procedures, pasture types, authorized state and local bodies to use and protect pastures, rights and obligation of pasture users, payments for the use of pastures, and measures for protecting pastures.
- Law on Dekhan Farms (March 15, 2016 - No. 1289)
- Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (July 18, 2017 - No. 1448)
- Pasture Development Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan (2016 – 2020)
- Tourism Development Programme in the Republic of Tajikistan (2018 – 2020)
- Agricultural Reform Programme of the Republic of Tajikistan (2012–2020), which includes the reform and reorganization of the Dekhan farms and ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources

41. The Evaluation Team also noted that Tajikistan acceded to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 2016. The snow leopard is listed under Appendix I (i.e. species threatened with extinction) of this convention. In the meantime, the Sixth report to CBD states that “*there is no legislative basis for regulation and control of the access, use and benefit sharing of genetic resources, and no secondary legislation regulating exports of large amounts of genetic resources, such as licorice, ferula, snow leopard species and other hunting species*”.

42. Finally, decisions of the government were made in 2018 to protect and increase the number of unique and red book species of animals (decision #9 of August 30, 2018 and #12 of November 29, 2018). The basis for these decisions targets particularly the conditions for increasing the population of snow leopards and other rare animals as tourist attractions.

43. Within this legislative context and the assessment stated in the “*6th National Report for the Convention on Biological Diversity*”, the project is very much aligned with the needs and priorities of Tajikistan. The project is highlighted in several places in this report as an instrument providing resources and assistance to pasture users' associations, forestry administrations, management of protected areas including the Tajik National Park to improve the protection and management of key habitats of snow leopards and its preys. It also said that the project also supports grant initiatives for local communities living around protected areas, alternative sources of income through the introduction of energy efficient technologies, restoration and rehabilitation of degraded pastures and forests, and benefits from participation in the protection and management of protected areas.

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

44. The first NBSAP published by the Tajik government was in 2003, approved on September 1, 2003 by the Decree no. 392. It was developed by the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center (NBBC) with the support of GEF, UNDP and UNEP. It entrusted the implementation of this action plan to the NBBC. It also gave the responsibility to monitor and report the implementation of this action plan and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to NBBC as the National Focal Point. This strategy and action plan included an extensive review of biodiversity in Tajikistan – including a large amount of data on biodiversity in Tajikistan as well as the review of the conservation and management of biodiversity. The strategy was aligned with the Convention on Biological Biodiversity (CBD) and was made of seven strategic objectives. The Action Plan included 15 Actions to protect and conserve biodiversity in Tajikistan.

45. The “*NBSAP up to 2020*” was approved on August 22, 2016 at a national workshop chaired by the

Chairman of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP). It was developed by NBBC with the support of the GEF and UNEP. Following the previous version, the NBSAP-2020 is a good update on the status of biodiversity in Tajikistan. It includes a review of the following major threats to biodiversity:

- Weakness of administrative mechanisms on implementation of laws and regulations;
- Attitude towards forests as to only the object of economic resources and poverty of the population;
- Unresolved/disputable issues of land utilization in forest areas which causes conflicts and lack of control and responsibility;
- Excessive forest clearance above the permitted norm (sanitary felling) for commercial reasons (for sale)
- Inefficiency of inter-sectorial cooperation in solution of forest preservation issues, primarily, energy sector, agricultural sector (pastures) and others.

46. The NBSAP-2020, which is well aligned with the global Aichi biodiversity targets, sets five strategic goals and twenty targets, which are divided into short-term, medium-term and long-term. These goals and targets are based on a detailed review of the reasons of the biodiversity loss in areas such as in forests, high mountains and pastures. The project is aligned with the NBSAP-2020. It provides additional resources to the government to implement parts of the NAPCSL as well as resources to strengthen the conservation of Biodiversity in the Pamir Alay and Tien Shan ecosystems.

#### ***Gender Considerations***

47. The Evaluation Team found that gender considerations were included in the design of the project. In Part II of the project document (Strategy), there is a detailed section discussing gender considerations. It details key gender issues and discuss how project activities will address some of these gender related issues, including the target of 1,200 women to be involved in project activities and 270 women as directly benefiting from project activities. Gender was also considered when identifying the performance indicators to measure the progress of the project. The sixth indicator to measure the project to achieve the objective is the “*Number of women involved in, and directly benefiting from project investments in the conservation and sustainable use of snow leopard, snow leopard prey and snow leopard habitats*”. Furthermore, several other indicators are gender-disaggregated indicators.

48. Since the inception of the project, a *Gender Analysis and Action Plan* was developed. However, it is mostly a copy of issues identified in the project document and how the project has been addressing them. The main addition to the gender considerations presented in the project document is a *Gender Action Plan*, which lists key activities implemented by the project and which have gender-based expected results; mostly the number of women who are benefiting from these activities. However, the Evaluation Team also noted that this *Gender Analysis and Action Plan* was only published in 2019. Nevertheless, gender mainstreaming is part of the implementation of project activities and gender activities are reported in annual progress reports.

#### ***UNDP Strategy in Tajikistan***

49. UNDP entered into an agreement with the Government of Tajikistan in October 1993 to provide assistance to the government for the benefit of the Tajik people. This agreement defines the scope and conditions under which UNDP assist the government in carrying out its development.

50. In December 2015, the United Nations (UN) in partnership with the government of Tajikistan launched its United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the period 2016-2020. Following an extensive consultation with government entities and other development partners, this assistance framework consists of six outcomes in four strategic areas. These areas include a) democratic governance, rule of law and human rights; b) sustainable and equitable economic development; c) social development, inclusion and empowerment; and d) resilience and environmental sustainability. Under this latter area, the outcome (#6) is “*people in Tajikistan are more resilient to natural and man-made disasters and benefit from improved policy and operational frameworks for environmental protection and management of natural resources*”.

51. Within the context of this agreement and the UNDAF – 2016-2020, UNDP developed its Country Programme Document (CPD) for the same period 2016-2020. This programme was developed with an in-depth situational analysis to identify key development issues and pathways for the country’s sustainable development based on practical experience and empirical evidence. The formulation of this programme was

also informed by the outcomes of the review of the NDS (2003-2015) and the UNDAF (2010-2015), as well as the national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda. The priorities of this programme are aligned with those of the NDS (2016-2030) and those of the UNDAF (2016-2020).

52. The CPD (2016-2020) focuses on four priorities using an issues-based approach and targeting the most vulnerable and excluded groups such as women in rural areas (including female-headed households), persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV and unemployed youth. These four priority areas are: (a) improved governance, rule of law and access to justice; (b) sustainable and equitable economic growth; (c) social equity and protection of vulnerable groups from violence and discrimination; and (d) resilience and environmental sustainability. The project is aligned with the fourth priority area, more specifically output 6.1 of the CPD (2016-2020) that is “*effective legislative, policy and institutional frameworks in place for conservation, sustainable use, access and benefit sharing of natural resources management, biodiversity, ecosystems*”.

### **GEF Focal Area Strategy**

53. As described in the project document, the project was developed (and is funded) under the GEF-6 cycle. As mentioned in the project document, the project 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 (SFM) Focal Area Strategies for the GEF-6 period. In particular, the project is well aligned with the biodiversity objectives BD-1: Improve sustainability of protected area systems; BD-2: Reduce threats to globally significant biodiversity; and BD-4: Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes and seascapes and production sectors. It is well aligned with the land degradation objective LD-3: Integrated landscapes: reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape and particularly Program 4: Scaling-up sustainable land management through the landscape approach. 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.

54. In conclusion, this project is well aligned with national priorities as well as with UNDP and GEF-6 focal areas strategies. It is a direct response to national priorities by: (i) preventing the further fragmentation of snow leopard and prey landscapes in Tajikistan; (ii) maintaining and/or restoring the quality of key snow leopard and prey habitats within these landscapes; (iii) improving the conservation status, and sustainability of pasture and forest use, in these key snow leopard and prey habitats; and (iv) reducing the direct threats to the survival of snow leopards and prey populations living in these key habitats. The project interventions focus on four strategic areas of intervention: (i) improving the conservation of specially protected nature areas (SPNAs) and community-based conservancies; (ii) improving the sustainable management of pasture lands across the snow leopard range and reducing conflicts between pastoralists and snow leopards and their preys; (iii) improving the ecological integrity of forests in the snow leopard range; and (iv) expanding the reach of research, monitoring and planning efforts about snow leopards, their preys and their habitats.

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

55. The *Strategic Results Framework* formulated 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) stated in the project document. The review of the objective and outcomes indicates a good 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 (9), 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.

56. The aim of the project is to support the government of Tajikistan in the implementation of the National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection (NSLEP) portfolio for Tajikistan. As discussed in the previous section, the project addresses existing barriers by promoting a landscape approach focusing on (i) preventing the further fragmentation of snow leopard and prey landscapes in Tajikistan; (ii) maintaining and/or restoring the quality of key snow leopard and prey habitats within these landscapes; (iii) improving the conservation status, and

sustainability of pasture and forest use, in these key snow leopard and prey habitats; and (iv) reducing the direct threats to the survival of snow leopards and prey populations living in these key habitats. The project has intervened mostly in snow leopard high-mountain habitats and ecosystems throughout Tajikistan.

57. The review of the *Strategic Results Framework* confirms 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 9 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
<b>Project Objective:</b> Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;427,400ha of protected areas under a secure, and effectively managed, monitoring and enforcement regime</li> <li>&gt;100,000 ha of high-altitude grasslands (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh- Darvaz areas under a regulated and sustainable management regime</li> <li>&gt;15,000 ha of high-altitude forest (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas under a sustainable management regime</li> <li>Number of primary snow leopard prey populations: &gt;1,400 Marco Polo Sheep (NT), &gt;5,000 Siberian Ibex (LC), and &gt;1,400 Heptner's markhor (EN)</li> <li>Total snow leopard population in Tajikistan: &gt;220</li> <li><b>Number of individuals (number of women as a proportion of the total)</b> <b>Number of women (as a proportion of the total)<sup>4</sup></b> involved in, and directly benefiting from project investments in the conservation and sustainable use of snow leopard, snow leopard prey and snow leopard habitats: Involvement: &gt;2000 (&gt;60%), and Direct benefits: &gt;450 (&gt;60%)</li> </ol>
<b>Component 1 – Conservation and sustainable management of key biodiversity areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Output 1.1:</b> Secure the conservation status and boundaries of protected areas</li> <li><b>Output 1.2:</b> Develop the capacity to implement a smart patrolling system in protected areas</li> <li><b>Output 1.3:</b> Improve the equipment and infrastructure to support the implementation of a smart patrol system in protected areas</li> <li><b>Output 1.4:</b> Enhance community involvement in, and beneficiation from, protected areas</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,837,018 ha of IUCN Category I and Category II protected areas</li> <li>Total annual budget (&gt;US\$450,000/annum) allocation for the management of IUCN Category I – IV protected areas</li> <li>METT scores for: Tajik NP (<b>Jirgital/Lakhsh</b> section) Tajik NP (<b>Tavildara/Sangvor</b> section, including Sangvor): <b>Jirgital/Lakhsh</b>: 44, and <b>Tavildara/Sangvor</b>: 40</li> <li>Number of active patrol rangers in the <b>Jirgital/Lakhsh</b> and <b>Tavildara/Sangvor</b> (including Sangvor) sections of Tajik NP: <b>Jirgital/Lakhsh</b>: 18, <b>Tavildara/Sangvor</b>: 16</li> <li>Extent (as a percentage of the total area) of <b>Jirgital/Lakhsh</b> and <b>Tavildara/Sangvor</b> (including Sangvor) sections of Tajik NP under a secure and effective monitoring and enforcement regime: <b>Jirgital/Lakhsh</b>: &gt;85%, <b>Tavildara/Sangvor</b>: &gt;60%</li> <li>&lt;5 (4)/annum poaching of snow leopard and prey; and &lt;60 (40) /annum other illegal (encroachments for crops and grazing, wood harvesting) incidents recorded (and prosecuted) per annum by ranger patrol staff from the <b>Jirgital/Lakhsh</b> and <b>Tavildara/Sangvor</b> sections of Tajik NP</li> <li>Number of individuals from targeted villages directly involved in (proportion of women), and financially benefiting from (proportion of women), the management of the <b>Jirgital/Lakhsh</b> and <b>Tavildara/Sangvor</b> sections of Tajik NP: Involvement in: &gt;2000 (&gt;1,100); Direct financial beneficiation from: &gt;150 (&gt;80)</li> </ol>
<b>Component 2 – Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in wider landscape outside protected areas.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Output 2.1:</b> Reduce impacts on, and improve the management of, livestock pastures</li> <li><b>Output 2.2:</b> Reduce impacts on, and improve the management of, forests</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of days of use of high-altitude pastures in the Hissar- Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas: Spring and autumn 45-55 days / Summer: 60-70 days</li> <li><b>Productivity (tons/ha) of the high-altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas / Productivity (dry fodder mass in tons/ha) of the high-altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas:</b> &gt;1 t/ha</li> <li>&gt;50% (as an average of the total grass/forb/herb cover per hectare) of palatable and edible species for ungulates and livestock in the high-altitude pastures of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas</li> </ol>

<sup>4</sup> Text highlighted in yellow was added in the inception report and strikethrough text was deleted.

Expected Results	Indicators/Targets at End of Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Output 2.3:</b> Strengthen wildlife monitoring and enforcement capacities</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. &gt;10 Pasture User Unions (PUUs) with approved pasture management plans under implementation in the high-altitude pastures of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas</li> <li>18. Number of households in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas directly benefiting from project technical and grant funding support for: &gt;40 implementation of sustainable pasture management practices; &gt;10 adoption of alternative fuel and energy technologies; and 5 community ranger pilot projects</li> <li>19. Pastures: 10,000 ha and forests: 6,000 ha of degraded high-altitude pastures and forests of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh- Darvaz areas under active rehabilitation or restoration</li> <li>20. &gt;3 Participatory Forest Management (PFM) committees actively involved in the planning, management and monitoring of high-altitude forests of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas</li> <li>21. &gt;100/annum of individuals involved in wildlife monitoring and enforcement training and skills development programmes</li> </ol>
<p><b>Component 3 – Support to international cooperation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Output 3.1:</b> Enhance the state of knowledge on snow leopard and prey populations</li> <li><b>Output 3.2:</b> Improve the coordination of, and cooperation in, snow leopard conservation and monitoring</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22. Establishment and maintenance of a: (i) national snow leopard Monitoring and Reporting system; and (ii) national snow leopard Information Management system</li> <li>23. National coverage (as a % of the total snow leopard range) of snow leopard (&gt;25%) and prey (&gt;20%) monitoring activities</li> <li>24. Approved and implemented National Action Plan for snow leopard conservation.</li> <li>25. Number of managers, scientists, researchers and academics participating in: (i) regional snow leopard and prey conservation initiatives (15); and (ii) regional monitoring and report-back meetings (10)</li> <li>26. 2 meetings per annum of the <b>National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee</b>: (i) National Environment Security Task Force (NEST) (4); (ii) <b>National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee</b> (5)</li> <li>27. 3 trans-boundary agreements (Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, China, Kyrgyzstan) addressing collaboration in the management of wildlife crime under implementation</li> </ol>

Source: project document

58. The project strategy or “*logic model*” was confirmed during the inception phase of the project, including at the inception workshop held in Dushanbe on November 4, 2016. No changes were made to the set of expected results presented in the *Strategic Results Framework* during the inception phase. In the meantime, the Evaluation Team confirmed that a good review was conducted during the inception phase. The changes made resulting from this review were documented in the inception report. It includes some minor changes to indicators and targets to be used for measuring the performance of the project; and changes to risks and assumptions made in the *Strategic Results Framework*. The report also included a good documentation of changes in the context of the project and an update of the expected outputs and planned activities as well as an update of the GEF tracking tools.

59. The “*logic model*” presented above provides a good response to national needs/priorities. In the meantime, the detailed review of the project “*chain of results*” (see Annex 2) indicates that it is an ambitious project with many planned distinct activities (88). There are all needed and are part of developing adequate capacities for a landscape approach for managing/conserving high-mountain biodiversity; meanwhile the sustainability of these improved capacities will be among the main challenges of the project over its remaining implementation period.

60. Nevertheless, despite this ambitious strategy with numerous planned activities to be implemented, an implementation timeframe of 5 years and a GEF financing of about \$4.2M, 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 a micro-grant scheme and technical support, local communities are also part of the project design and are benefitting from the protected areas.

61. Regarding the set of indicators and their respective targets to measure the performance of the project, a total of 27 indicators were identified to measure the progress made in achieving its expected outcomes and

objective: 6 indicators were identified to measure how well the project is progressing toward its objective; 7 indicators to monitor the progress under component 1; 8 indicators to monitor the progress under component 2; and 6 indicators to measure the progress made under component 3 (*see table 4 above*). For a project of this size, it is a good number of indicators (*see also Section 3.3.5*). The Evaluation Team noted that they take gender monitoring into consideration. Wherever possible, targets are gender disaggregated, guiding the monitoring process to collect disaggregated information by gender.

62. 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 many planned activities to be implemented over the lifetime of the project. The project focuses on four strategic areas: (i) improving the conservation of specially protected nature areas (SPNAs) and community-based conservancies; (ii) improving the sustainable management of pasture lands across the snow leopard range and reducing conflicts between pastoralists and snow leopards and their preys; (iii) improving the ecological integrity of forests in the snow leopard range; and (iv) expanding the reach of research, monitoring and planning efforts about snow leopards, their preys and their habitats. The complexity of the project 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 high mountains of Tajikistan.

## **3.2. Progress Towards Results**

63. 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**

64. As presented in Sections 3.1, the project has been implemented through three (3) components. The implementation progress is measured though a set of 27 indicators with their respective targets. On the next page is a table listing key deliverables achieved so far by the project against each outcome (component) and their corresponding targets. A color “*traffic light system*” code was used to represent the level of progress achieved so far by the project. Finally, a discussion of results achieved so far is presented at the end of this sections.

 Target achieved

 On target to be achieved

 Not on target to be achieved

5 The analysis presented in this Section have been conducted with the assumption that the project will terminate in August 2021.

**Table 5: List of Delivered Results**

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTR Assess.
<b>Project Objective:</b> Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &gt;427,400ha of protected areas under a secure, and effectively managed, monitoring and enforcement regime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All justifications and legal documents were drafted to upgrade the conservation status of the Sangvor zakaznik into the Sangvor Section of the Tajik NP. This will contribute to improved status and protection of 365,613 ha of the SPNA</li> <li>• Four (4) checkpoints are being built at the entry points of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of the Tajik National Park to enhance protection of these SPNAs.</li> <li>• Smart patrolling capacities of staff in targeted protected areas are increased through the provision of vehicles (cars, motorcycles, pack transport), the development of data templates on how to conduct smart patrolling in protected areas; and the organization of 5 workshops on smart patrol system and monitoring of snow leopard ecosystems (180 persons total, of which 10 were women).</li> <li>• Concept of wildlife monitoring system was developed, and which will be implemented in the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of the Tajik National Park.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &gt;100,000 ha of high-altitude grasslands (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh- Darvaz areas under a regulated and sustainable management regime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,125 ha of pastures are under rehabilitation, including through the cluster method, in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas. Relevant pasture user unions and Leskhozes were provided with 4 tons of seeds (alfalfa, sainfoin, meadow clover etc.) and equipped with 14 types of equipment and machinery (shovels, saw, pipes, water hoses, mini tractors, fence net etc.).</li> <li>• Three (3) management plans for pasture user unions and recommendations for the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded pastures covering 767 ha on the territory of the Shakhristan district were developed (using the example of the Iskanderkul, Sangvor and Kusavlisay nature reserves).</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &gt;15,000 ha of high-altitude forest (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas under a sustainable management regime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,500 ha of high-altitude forests are being restored.</li> <li>• 14 items of equipment and appliances (shovels, mini tractor, equipment), as well as 2,470 forest seedlings (apples, walnuts, cherries, junipers, almonds, pistachios, etc.) were handed over to the forestry departments (leskhoz) in project areas to restore degraded forest areas in the snow leopard range.</li> <li>• Consultation meetings with PFM committees in project interventions to discuss the issues of rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of primary snow leopard prey populations: &gt;1,400 Marco Polo Sheep (NT), &gt;5,000 Siberian Ibex (LC), and &gt;1,400 Heptner's markhor (EN)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26,483 Marco Polo Sheep were identified in the area of TNP in GBAO and 4,288 Siberian Ibex were identified in the central part of the TNP (on the area around 600-650,000 ha) (2018).</li> <li>• 2,929 Markhor were identified in the Khazratishokh and Darvoz ridges; inclusive of 417 Markhor in five key project areas of Dashtijum and Darvoz (2019)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total snow leopard population in Tajikistan: &gt;220</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The snow leopard population in Tajikistan was confirmed to be 220 at a round table held by the project in collaboration with the Academy of Sciences and a significant growth of ungulates was noted in various parts of the country.</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTR Assess.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 camera traps were installed on the area of the Darvaz Ridge and Sarsarak Ridge (covering the area of 69,800 ha) and identified the presence of 3 snow leopards.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of individuals (number of women as a proportion of the total) involved in, and directly benefiting from project investments in the conservation and sustainable use of snow leopard, snow leopard prey and snow leopard habitats: Involvement: &gt;2000 (&gt;60%), and Direct benefits: &gt;450 (&gt;60%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4,000 (20% women).</li> <li>626 people, (47% women) have directly benefitted from the project grant support.</li> <li>As part of the agreement with the State Institution for SPNA, 18 staff members and public rangers are provided with a monthly salary (on the cost-sharing basis 50x50).</li> <li>140 SPNA staff members and rangers of Sangvor and Lakhsh National park acquired skills and knowledge of the smart patrol system and wildlife monitoring during relevant training activities of the project.</li> </ul>	
<b>Component 1 – Conservation and sustainable management of key biodiversity areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Output 1.1:</b> Secure the conservation status and boundaries of protected areas</li> <li><b>Output 1.2:</b> Develop the capacity to implement a smart patrolling system in protected areas</li> <li><b>Output 1.3:</b> Improve the equipment and infrastructure to support the implementation of a smart patrol system in protected areas</li> <li><b>Output 1.4:</b> Enhance community involvement in, and beneficiation from, protected areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,837,018 ha of IUCN Category I and Category II protected areas</li> <li>Total annual budget (&gt;US\$450,000/annum) allocation for the management of IUCN Category I – IV protected areas</li> <li>METT scores for: Tajik NP (Lakhsh section) Tajik NP (Sangvor section, including Sangvor): Lakhsh: 44, and Sangvor: 40</li> <li>Number of active patrol rangers in the Lakhsh and Sangvor (including Sangvor) sections of Tajik NP: Lakhsh: 18, Sangvor: 16</li> <li>Extent (as a percentage of the total area) of Lakhsh and Sangvor (including Sangvor) sections of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2,836,018 ha consist of 2,777,018 ha (baseline) plus an additional 59,000 ha through the upgrade of the status of the Sangvor zakaznik. All justifications and legal documents were drafted to upgrade the conservation status of the Sangvor zakaznik and its inclusion to the Sangvor Section of the TNP.</li> <li>The total annual funding allocation for all categories of protected areas (I-IV) excluding zakazniks in 2019 amounted to TJS 3,320,922 or approx. US\$ 351,807 (exchange rate = 9.4396).</li> <li>Budgetary allocations for the Lakhsh section of TNP in 2019 amounted to TJS 129,771 or approx. US\$ 13,747 (exchange rate = 9.4396)</li> <li>Budgetary allocations for the Sangvor section of TNP in 2019 amounted to TJS 155,233 or approx. US\$ 16,444 (exchange rate = 9.4396).</li> <li>In 2019, the project contributed to salaries of rangers totally US\$ 10,800.</li> <li>METT scores: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tajik National Park (Lakhsh section): 58 (20)</li> <li>Sangvor Special Nature Reserve + Sangvor section of Tajik National Park: 66 (20)</li> </ul> </li> <li>32 active patrol rangers: 16 rangers in Lakhsh section and 16 rangers in Sangvor section of TNP.</li> <li>The rangers are employed with 50% of salary financing covered by the project support and are provided with field tools and the needed equipment to effectively perform active patrolling.</li> <li>The patrolling coverage by each ranger reaches 10,000 ha of protected areas. Totally, ranger patrols cover 150,000 ha of the Sangvor section and 35,000 ha of the Lakhsh section of TNP. The estimated</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTR Assess.
	Tajik NP under a secure and effective monitoring and enforcement regime: Lakhsh: >85%, Sangvor: >60%	<p>coverage of PA areas under a secure and effective monitoring and enforcement regime is 30% for Lakhsh, and 40% for Sangvor sections of TNP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rangers now have a set of required equipment and materials for an effective monitoring and enforcement of larger PA areas, including motorcycles, horses and donkeys.</li> <li>More than 80 employees including 10 women of the State Institution for SPNA were trained in spatial patrolling and monitoring using the GIS system and camera traps.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt;5 (4)/annum poaching of snow leopard and prey; and &lt;60 (40) /annum other illegal (encroachments for crops and grazing, wood harvesting) incidents recorded (and prosecuted) per annum by ranger patrol staff from the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 attempts of illegal hunting and export of products of wild animals were stopped in the territory of the Sangvor section of TNP in 2018-2019,</li> <li>12 incidents of forest cutting, and unlicensed collection of forest products were stopped.</li> <li>Illegal hunting and poaching in the Sangvor and the Lakhsh sections of TNP decreased as the capacities to detect illegal activities increased.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of individuals from targeted villages directly involved in (proportion of women), and financially benefiting from (proportion of women), the management of the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP: Involvement in: &gt;2000 (&gt;1,100); Direct financial beneficiation from: &gt;150 (&gt;80)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More than 600 individuals (95 women) living in the proximity of the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of the TNP are involved in the management of these PAs (through proactive informing the administration about the incidents of poaching and illegal use of biodiversity resources, performing environment protection activities on the territories leased, etc.).</li> <li>More than 118 individuals (40 women) and including 18 rangers employed with the project support, financially benefit from patrolling, the collection of forest products and the use of pastures under favorable conditions.</li> </ul>	
<b>Component 2 –</b> Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in wider landscape outside protected areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Output 2.1:</b> Reduce impacts on, and improve the management of, livestock pastures</li> <li><b>Output 2.2:</b> Reduce impacts on, and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of days of use of high-altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas: Spring and autumn 45-55 days / Summer: 60-70 days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently the number of days of use of high-altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas is 70 days during spring/autumn and 80 days during summer.</li> <li>5 workshops were conducted to promote the reduction of the number of days of high-mountain pasture use covering 700 ha attended by 100 individuals from Sangvor, Lakhsh, Shakhristan, Baljuvon.</li> <li>Procurement of hay to provide livestock with fodder during the autumn-spring period as well as for the supply of gas balloons and cooking facilities to shepherds and pastoralists to reduce deforestation in pastures.</li> <li>In May 2019 the project pasture expert participated in a program aired on national TV, where he presented information on methods of reducing the number of days of pasture use through the late transfer of livestock to summer pastures</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTR Assess.
<p>improve the management of, forests</p> <p><b>• Output 2.3:</b> Strengthen wildlife monitoring and enforcement capacities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Productivity (tons/ha) of the high-altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas: &gt;1 t/ha</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average productivity of high-altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas is estimated at 1.5 t/ha</li> <li>A list of priority forage crops was prepared for the restoration / rehabilitation of 1,000 ha of degraded pastures.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;50% (as an average of the total grass/forb/herb cover per hectare) of palatable and edible species for ungulates and livestock in the high-altitude pastures of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In high-mountain pastures of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas the percentage of edible plants for ungulates and livestock ranges from 35% to 65%. A list of fodder crops was prepared for the rehabilitation of degraded pastures.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;10 Pasture User Unions (PUUs) with approved pasture management plans under implementation in the high-altitude pastures of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three (3) Pasture User Unions located in Bunjekat, Yangikurgan and Shakhristan jamoats of the Shakhristan district have approved pasture management plans covering an area of 50.15 ha.</li> <li>Ongoing development of plans for seasonal use of high-mountain pastures in Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz (for PUUs in Sangvor, Lakhsh, Sh.Shohin, Baljuvon, Asht and Rasht districts)</li> <li>134 people (26 women) representing the PUUs in Shamsiddin-Shokhin, Shakhristan, Sangvor and Sagirdasht areas gained knowledge about methods of restoring / rehabilitating degraded pastures during 5 workshops.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of households in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas directly benefiting from project technical and grant funding support for: &gt;40 implementation of sustainable pasture management practices: &gt;10 adoption of alternative fuel and energy technologies; and 5 community ranger pilot projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Sustainable pasture management:</i> 3 households directly and 15 households indirectly benefitting from 2 small grants projects on construction of corrals (for 1,000 heads) in the Dashtjum Jamoat of Sh. Shokhin district and in Jamoat Tavildara of Sangvor district (21 beneficiaries (6 women)). 1 household directly benefit restoration of degraded forest ecosystems (6.5 hectares) located within the snow leopard area in Jamoat N. Makhmudov of the Sh. Shokhin district.</li> <li><i>Fuel and energy technologies:</i> 24 households directly and 15 households indirectly benefiting from the small grant on introduction of renewable energy sources and energy efficient technologies in the Dashtjum jamoat, Sh. Shokhin district (287 beneficiaries (140 women)).</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10,000 ha of degraded high-altitude pastures and 6,000 ha of forests of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh- Darvaz areas under active rehabilitation or restoration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,125 ha of pastures are under rehabilitation in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas. Relevant PUUs and Leskhozes were provided with 4 tons of seeds (alfalfa, sainfoin, meadow clover etc.) and equipped with 14 types of equipment and machinery (shovels, saw, pipes, water hoses, mini tractors, fence net, etc.).</li> <li>1,500 ha of high-altitude forests are under restoration/rehabilitation. 14 items of equipment and appliances (shovels, mini tractor, equipment), as well as 2,470 forest seedlings (apples, walnuts,</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTR Assess.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;3 Participatory Forest Management (PFM) committees actively involved in the planning, management and monitoring of high-altitude forests of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas</li> <li>&gt;100/annum of individuals involved in wildlife monitoring and enforcement training and skills development programmes</li> </ul>	<p>cherries, junipers, almonds, pistachios, etc.) were handed over to the forestry departments (Leskhozes) to restore degraded forest areas in the snow leopard range</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representatives of 3 PFM committees participated in project activities. Three consultative meetings (attended by 10 men and 2 women) were held with the representatives of PFM committees of Sangvor, Aini and Sh. Shokhin districts to improve forest management and cooperation with the project.</li> <li>Concepts of forestry management plans for Kusavlisay, Iskanderkul and Sangvor zakazniks developed and covering 108,844 ha</li> <li>Training modules on monitoring and protection of wildlife in forest and rangelands were developed.</li> <li>Conducted 5 workshops on monitoring and conservation of wildlife engaging 200 individuals (39 women) from the Committee for Environmental Protection, the Forest Agency, local administration, communities, farmers, etc.</li> <li>A regional workshop on transboundary cooperation was held in Khujand with the participation of more than 50 representatives (12 women) from the government and academic institutions, academic universities and NGO representatives, as well as representatives of environmental departments of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, where the issues of monitoring and protection of snow leopard ecosystems were discussed.</li> </ul>	
<b>Component 3 – Support to international cooperation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Output 3.1:</b> Enhance the state of knowledge on snow leopard and prey populations</li> <li><b>Output 3.2:</b> Improve the coordination of, and cooperation in, snow leopard conservation and monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment and maintenance of a: (i) national snow leopard Monitoring and Reporting (M&amp;R) system; and (ii) national snow leopard Information Management (IM) system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultations held to identify the needs for an effective (i) national snow leopard Monitoring and Reporting system and (ii) national snow leopard Information Management system.</li> <li>Participation of a national representative from the CEP to a workshop on knowledge of monitoring data management and processing conducted by WWF Russia in Krasnoyarsk, Russian Federation</li> <li>Installation of 10 camera traps on the Darvaz Ridge and the Sarsarak Ridge which helped the identification of 3 snow leopards in the area.</li> <li>A concept for a unified regional system for counting snow leopards was reviewed during the regional meeting in Sughd Region in April 2019.</li> <li>Training on using a Geographic Information System for snow leopard monitoring was organized for scientists and specialized experts from research institutes and environment protection agencies.</li> <li>Drafted agreements with project partners on monitoring different areas of snow leopard ecosystems (including Pamir National Park, Sarikhosor and Baljuvon district, Hissar Ridge, Panjakent district)</li> <li>Routes for ecosystems and inventory of wild ungulates monitoring were identified in Darvoz and Shamsiddin Shokhin Districts.</li> <li>Monitoring routes were conducted in Zerafshan and Turkestan ridges including GPS recording of the location of palatable plants eaten by wild ungulates.</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTR Assess.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National coverage (as a % of the total snow leopard range) of snow leopard (&gt;25%) and prey (&gt;20%) monitoring activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a Snow Leopard Information Management System (SLIMS) underway to monitor snow leopards and their prey species in protected areas, but also throughout the country and beyond.</li> <li>National coverage of snow leopard and prey monitoring activities is now estimated at 19% of snow leopard range and 14% of its prey range.</li> <li>New monitoring areas now include Shirkent, Iskanderkul, Shahristan, Mountainous Mastchoh, Asht, Aktash zakaznik, Sarsaryak Ridge, Kanask and Vahdat areas. A total of 112 camera traps were installed, covering 362,673 ha in these areas</li> <li>Installation of 10 camera traps on the territory of the Darvaz Ridge and the Sarsarak Ridge and recorded the presence of 3 snow leopards.</li> <li>Inventory of snow leopard prey species including the Siberian Ibex and Markhor were conducted in five key habitat areas, including the Khazrati Shokh Ridge, Darvaz, and Emom Askar Mountains with the collaboration of the Severtsov Institute (Russia). The presence of 417 markhors and more than 20 siberian ibexes was confirmed.</li> <li>The ecotourist route "<i>In the Footsteps of Snow Leopard</i>" was developed and introduced into practice in the Shamsiddin Shokhin district, including the involvement of local communities in high-mountain ecosystems monitoring on an area exceeding 15,000 km<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>An assessment of transboundary snow leopard habitat areas was conducted in the uppers of the Kuramin Ridge and the Hissar Ridge (its northern top part). Comprehensive GPS data was collected on snow leopard and prey habitats and catalogized for further storage in the database.</li> <li>A "Round table with the Academy of Sciences on project activities and cooperation development" was held in Dushanbe in March 2019 (31 participants of which 6 were women), where national scientists made presentations on monitoring. Monitoring data was also presented by participants from GBAO, non-governmental organizations and a scientist from Russia.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved and implemented National Action Plan for snow leopard conservation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The National Action Plan on Conservation of Snow Leopard (NAPCSL) was updated to enable synergies with the Global Strategy on Snow Leopard Conservation and to include transboundary cooperation and adaptation to climate change for conservation of snow leopard ecosystems activities. This NAPCSL is now endorsed by the Academy of Sciences. The final step will be the finalization of the NAPCSL in cooperation with the Committee for Environmental Protection for its approval.</li> <li>A number of NAPCSL activities aimed at monitoring and assessment of high-altitude ecosystems, training on patrolling and data collection were completed and reported during Snow Leopard Conservation Committee meetings</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of managers, scientists, researchers and academics participating in: (i) regional snow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International cooperation allowed specialists and scientists to expand their knowledge, capacities and practical skills related to high-mountain snow leopard ecosystems. Within the regional-scale activities, specialists from Tajikistan took part in forming policies on conservation of snow leopard and its</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTR Assess.
	leopard and prey conservation initiatives (15); and (ii) regional monitoring and report-back meetings (10)	<p>ecosystems, and also established relevant partnerships, that in turn allowed Tajikistan to host the regional meeting of Central-Asian countries and Russia with the participation of the GSLEP Secretariat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A total of 46 managers, scientists, researchers and academics participated in regional monitoring initiatives:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contributed to editing the draft Memorandum and Action Plan on joint actions for conservation of snow leopards' landscapes in Western Tien Shan and Pamir Alay during the transboundary workshop held on 16-17th July 2018 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. 6 people took part in the workshop</li> <li>● Conducted a regional meeting on April 10-12, 2018 in the Sughd region of Tajikistan which became a successful platform to discuss new perspectives and practices of cross-border cooperation of Central Asian countries on the conservation of snow leopard ecosystems. More than 50 people (12 women), including government representatives and specialists of environmental organizations of Tajikistan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (17 persons), national and international scientists (6 persons), representatives of national and international NGOs including GSLEP, WWF, European Union, AKAH (7 persons), as well as representatives of the United Nations Development Programme in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (10 persons), discussed the experience, new methods and technologies of conservation of highland ecosystems and wildlife.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● 7 managers, scientists, researchers participated in regional monitoring and report-back meetings:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consultations with WWF Russia in October 2018 resulted in gained experiences on developing and implementing a smart patrol system and SLIM monitoring. As a continuation of this initiative, one specialist of NBBC (male) took part in the relevant practical training in Altai.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2 meetings per annum of the National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In 2018-2019 the project supported two (2) meetings of the National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee:</li> <li>● March 13, 2019 with the participation of environment control bodies, the Academy of Science and its institutions, researches, business partners from Tajikistan and Russia. The discussions were devoted to the planned practical activities on the ground, interdepartmental and transboundary cooperation, the creation of infrastructure in targeted PAs for deployment of the SMART patrol system, the adoption of relevant technologies for SLIM monitoring and relevant database.</li> <li>● May 21, 2019 a field meeting held in Khujand. The outputs and recommendations of that meeting were related to the implementation of the NAP</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3 trans-boundary agreements (Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, China, Kyrgyzstan) addressing collaboration in the management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One (1) transboundary agreement (Protocol to establish trans-boundary cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic signed on March 19, 2018), and the relevant annually updated action plan is being implemented and the progress is reviewed by the government of Tajikistan.</li> </ul>	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results (Deliverables)	MTR Assess.
	of wildlife crime under implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contributed to editing the draft Memorandum and Action Plan on joint actions for conservation of snow leopards' landscapes in Western Tien Shan and Pamir Alay (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) during the transboundary workshop held on 16-17th July 2018 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.</li> <li>● Comprehensive legal and technical review of the draft document for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan in order to enable MFA to knowledgeably promote the document within the government of Tajikistan.</li> <li>● The regional meeting held on April 10-12, 2018 in the Sughd region of Tajikistan became a successful platform for discussion of new perspectives and practices of cross-border cooperation among Central Asian countries for the conservation of snow leopard ecosystems. As a result of this Regional Workshop, the <i>Sughd Resolution</i> was developed and adopted identifying priority areas for cooperation in conservation and monitoring of snow leopard and prey in transboundary ecosystems.</li> <li>● Participated in exchanges of views on the <i>Bishkek Declaration</i> during meetings at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (7-23 November 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt), including the promotion of the project strategy and progress supported by various media products done by the project.</li> </ul>	

Source: Adapted from project progress reports, mostly from PIR 2019 and PIR 2018.

65. The Evaluation Team also reviewed the GEF tracking tools for this project, which include the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), the Biodiversity (BD) Tracking Tool, the land degradation Portfolio Monitoring and Assessment Tool (PMAT), and the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Tracking Tool. Tracking tools are instruments developed by the GEF Secretariat to measure progress in achieving the impacts and outcomes established at the portfolio (global) level. The information contained in these tracking tools is collated together at the global level to provide a global summary on the progress made in each GEF focal area.

66. The Evaluation Team noted that all these tracking tools were completed at the inception of the project and have been updated at the time of the MTR. Regarding the Biodiversity (BD), PMAT and the SFM tracking tools, the main differences noted between the dataset completed at the outset of the project and the dataset completed at the time of the MTR are updated information on areas under rehabilitation and/or sustainable management with the support of the project, project disbursements and people benefitting from the project.

67. Regarding the METT, the main output of this tool is the METT score that is also a performance indicator (*see Table 4 – indicator #9*) used to measure the performance of the first component of the project. The table below shows the scores for each protected area at the time of the inception phase, at the MTR time, and at project end (targets).

**Table 6: METT Scores**

Protected Area	METT Scores		
	at Inception	at MTR	Target at end of project
Sangvor Special Nature Reserve + Sangvor section of Tajik National Park	20	66	40
Tajik National Park (Lakhsh section)	20	58	44

Sources: Project document, Inception report, PIR 2019 and information collected from the Project Team.

68. The review of these scores indicates a major improvement in the management effectiveness of protected areas. From a score of 20 at the time this project was formulated, the assessment conducted at the time of the MTR concluded that this score was now 66 for the Sangvor Special Nature Reserve and 58 for the Lakhsh section of the TNP. This is a large increase for these two scores, and they are already much higher than the anticipated targets at the end of the project, respectively scores of 40 and 44. They also represent respectively 67% and 59% of the maximum score of 99.

69. A more detailed review of these scores indicates that the changes are mostly due to project activities implemented to strengthen the management capacity of these two protected areas - Lakhsh section and Sangvor section of the TNP – including the process to officially make these sections part of the TNP, delimitation of these sections, procurement of some equipment, training on smart patrol system, etc. It is a positive development. The main challenge will now be to sustain these capacities over the long term and particularly after the end of the project.

70. Overall, the project is progressing well towards its outcome targets and it has one 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. However, the Evaluation Team also noted that some targets to measure the performance of the project to achieve its objective may not be achieved on time. It is particularly the case for the second and third targets: “>100,000 ha of high-altitude grasslands (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh- Darvaz areas under a regulated and sustainable management regime”; and “>15,000 ha of high-altitude forest (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas under a sustainable management regime”. The Evaluation Team could not find the rationale for the identification of these two quantitative indicators/targets, but it seems high and may not be achieved during the lifetime of the project.

71. Nevertheless, the project management team has been able to implement activities and deliver intermediate results under each component as planned in the project strategy; it is on track to be a satisfactory project by August 2021 and should contribute to the “conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods”. Below is a summary

of key deliverables under each component:

72. Under **Component 1** (*GEF budget USD 1,890,657 – Used USD 633,8416 or 34%*), the project has been focusing on strengthening the capacity to manage protected areas with an emphasis on 2 areas adjoining the TNP: Sangvor and Lakhsh. Regarding the Sangvor section, the project supported the process to officialize this area as part of the TNP; including delimitation of the section (boundaries) and drafting of the document necessary to be submitted to the government through SPNA for its approval. The project also supported the installation of four checkpoints at the entrance of these two sections. It provided some equipment such as cars and motorcycles as well as horses, donkeys and GPS in some areas. The project also supported the organization of workshops on smart patrol system and snow leopard ecosystems monitoring in protected areas. Finally, under this component, the project supported the development of a concept (policy) for wildlife monitoring.

73. This outcome/component 1 has been progressing well and it should be completed by the end of the project; though it was noted the low disbursement so far under this component (only 34% of the planned budget at inception versus 67% of the elapsed time). As a result of activities under this component, Tajikistan should be better equipped with management skills and tools to better manage its protected areas, including a greater patrolling capacity of Rangers to protect and conserve these areas, including the capacity to monitor illegal hunting and poaching. This greater capacity is already shown through the METT tracking tools which revealed a large increase in management effectiveness of protected areas between the time the project was formulated and the MTR.

74. Under **Component 2** (*GEF budget USD 1,355,700 – Used USD 736,212 or 54%*), the project has focused on the resilience of ecosystems and the connectivity of habitats in wider landscape outside protected areas. In collaboration with livestock owners, the project has been seeking to reduce the number of days of high-altitude summer pastures in the Hissar- Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas by providing hay (fodder) and gas balloons/cooking facilities to pastoralists/shepherds to reduce pressure (deforestation and overgrazing) on these ecosystems. Awareness raising activities took place through workshops, and a programme aired on national TV. It has also included activities to increase the productivity of these areas by planting forage crops for livestock to rehabilitate degraded pastures; and to monitor palatable and edible species for ungulates and livestock available in these types of pastures. So far, the project has supported the establishment of 3 Pasture User Unions (PUUs), involving 134 people (26 women). Each PUU has prepared its own pasture management plan. The project has also involved local communities in sustainable pasture management, fuel and energy technologies and in piloting community rangers. Project involvement includes technical assistance in these areas and grant funding for corrals (to protect livestock from predators); introduction of renewable energy sources and efficient technologies; and piloting/increasing the number of community inspectors to monitor illegal hunting and poaching. Finally, the project has supported the rehabilitation of high-altitude pastures and forests through the procurement of equipment (shovels, saw, pipes, water hoses, mini tractors, fence net, etc.), seeds and forest seedlings.

75. This outcome/component 2 has been progressing well and it should be completed by the end of the project. As a result of activities under this component, Tajikistan should be better equipped with skills, knowledge and equipment to manage and monitor high-altitude mountain pastures and forest, while sustaining livelihood of local communities.

76. Under **Component 3** (*GEF budget USD 735,900 – Used USD 297,201 or 40%*), the project has been supporting the development of a Snow Leopard Information Management System (SLIMS) to monitor the population of snow leopards and their prey species in protected areas; as well as the standardization and methodology for monitoring – including counting - the population of snow leopards. The project also supported the purchase and installation of camera traps in multiple protected areas to monitor the population of snow leopard and their preys. This equipment has been used to start monitoring activities. Furthermore, within the context of engaging local communities in monitoring their natural resources, the project also promoted an ecotourism route “*In the Footsteps of Snow Leopard*” to contribute to improving the livelihood of local communities. The project also contributed to the update of the *National Action Plan for Conservation of Snow Leopard in Tajikistan (NAPCSL)* to enable synergies with the *Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection*

6 Actual disbursement figures are as of end of October 2019.

*Program* (GSLEP, 2013) and to include transboundary cooperation and adaptation to climate change for conservation of snow leopard ecosystems activities. Based on this action plan, activities aimed at monitoring and assessment of high-altitude ecosystems, training on patrolling and data collection were completed and reported during Snow Leopard Conservation Committee meetings. Finally, the project has also been involved in drafting a Memorandum and Action Plan on joint actions for the conservation of snow leopards' landscapes in Western Tien Shan and Pamir Alay (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan). This draft memo is being discussed/reviewed by these government and should be signed in the coming months.

77. This outcome/component 3 has been progressing well and it should be completed by the end of the project; though similar to component 1, it was noted the low disbursement so far under this component (only 40% of the planned budget at inception versus 67% of the elapsed time). As a result of activities under this component, Tajikistan should be better equipped to monitor and manage the information on the population of snow leopards and their preys as well as to have a transboundary programming framework for the conservation of snow leopard landscapes.

78. So far, the project has been successful in delivering its planned activities. The implementation of the project is adhering to its strategy designed at the outset. As discussed in section 3.1.2, this is a project with a broad scope, and it provides services and goods in four main areas: (i) improving the conservation of specially protected nature areas (SPNAs) and community-based conservancies; (ii) improving the sustainable management of pasture lands across the snow leopard range and reducing conflicts between pastoralists and snow leopards and their preys; (iii) improving the ecological integrity of forests in the snow leopard range; and (iv) expanding the reach of research, monitoring and planning efforts about snow leopards, their preys and their habitats. It is anticipated that all these deliverables will contribute to reaching the objective of the project that is the “*Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods.*” The value of the project is to find a balance between conserving snow leopards and their preys in high-altitude mountain ecosystems and the sustainable use of natural resources in these ecosystems to sustain livelihoods of local communities.

79. However, the review conducted for this MTR raises one key question: 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 critical question which needs to be reviewed carefully in order to maximize the sustainability of project achievements over the long-term. Good progress has been made so far in strengthening the management of protected areas and in better managing high-altitude mountain ecosystems; but will it be enough to sustain a lasting positive change in high-mountain biodiversity conservation and illegal wildlife trade? It is recognized that more activities will be implemented by the project to consolidate these changes between now and the end of the project. However, 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.

80. In conclusion, the project has made some good progress and it has about 21 more months of implementation. The implementation adheres to the project strategy detailed in the project document that is used as a “blue-print” by the project implementation team. The Evaluation Team also found that the project is implemented with a good participative approach to engage stakeholders in project activities. The fact that the project is implemented by the NBBC is also a success factor leading to a good national ownership of the project. This participation and ownership will certainly contribute to the sustainability of project achievements. However, due to the broad scope of this project, a key question of long-term sustainability of project achievements is raised by the Evaluation Team. A recommendation is made above to mitigate this risk.

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

81. The project started in August 2016 and will end in August 2021. At the time of this review, the project has completed 39 months of implementation and has 21 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 the long-term sustainability of capacities developed with the project support. 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 desired changes over the long term?

82. The rationale of the project for promoting a comprehensive integrated landscape approach for the protection of biodiversity, and pastures and forest resources in the snow leopard range of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan ecosystems 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. These barriers were: (a) Limited resources for, and capabilities in, the planning and management of SPNAs; (b) Unsustainable land use management practices outside the SPNAs; and (c) Incomplete information and knowledge management systems for management decision making and trans-boundary cooperation.

83. 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 Pamir Alai and Tian Shan ecosystems; including Snow Leopard conservation. Strategically, the project seeks to contribute to: (i) preventing the further fragmentation of snow leopard and prey landscapes in Tajikistan; (ii) maintaining and/or restoring the quality of key snow leopard and prey habitats within these landscapes; (iii) improving the conservation status, and sustainability of pasture and forest use, in these key snow leopard and prey habitats; and (iv) reducing the direct threats to the survival of snow leopards and prey populations living in these key habitats. It also includes the consideration of livelihood needs of local communities and strengthening the management of protected areas as anchors of conservation within a productive semi-forested pastoral alpine landscape.

84. As discussed in previous sections, this project is timely and responds to national priorities. It is making progress in strengthening the management of protected areas but also ensuring biodiversity conservation in the wider landscape, while at the same time seeking to increase and sustain the livelihoods of local communities to ensure they become good stewards of the local biodiversity. The review of the progress made indicates that the project will contribute to the removal of the barriers identified during the formulation of the project. However, this is an ambitious project and the question of sustainability of capacities developed with the support of the project remains. Considering the time left to implement the second part of this project, it is recommended to conduct capacity assessments of key 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**

85. 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**

86. The management arrangements of this project are as follows:

- The *GEF Agency* for this project is UNDP. At the request of the Government of Tajikistan, the UNDP Country Office provides *Direct Project Services (DPS)*, including procurement of goods and services, contracting, human resources management, and financial services (*This function is funded by UNDP TRAC funds*).
- The *Implementing Partner* of the project is the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre (NBBC). It is responsible for the overall implementation of the project, including the facilitation of all project activities (*This function is funded by the government*).
- The project is guided by a *Project Steering Committee (PSC)* as the executive decision-making body of the project. It is composed of the main government entities related to biodiversity conservation and pasture and forest management as well as few NGOs and local administrations. It provides strategic oversight and guidance based upon project progress assessments and related recommendations from the Project Manager (PM). The PSC ensures that the project remains on course to deliver the desired outcomes of the required quality. The PSC met five times since the inception of the project.
- A *Project Director (PD)* was appointed by the NBBC. The PD provides the strategic oversight and guidance to project implementation and chairs the meetings of the Steering Committee (*This function is funded by the government*).

- A full time *Project Manager (PM)* was hired by UNDP and approved by the PSC. The PM is tasked with the day-to-day management of project activities, as well as with financial and administrative reporting. He is guided by Annual Work Plans, following UNDP Results Based Management (RBM) standards. The PM prepares Annual Work Plans (AWPs) in advance of each successive year and submit them to the PSC for approval (*This function is funded by the GEF grant*).
- A *Project Management Unit (PMU)* was established at the beginning of the project; it is located on the premises of NBBC in Dushanbe. It is headed by the PM and provides project administration, management and technical support as required by the needs of day-to-day operations of the project. The unit is composed of the following staff:
  - i. Project Manager (PM) – *Full time funded by GEF grant*
  - ii. Project Financial Assistant – *Full time funded by UNDP TRAC*
  - iii. Project Administrative Assistant – *Full time funded by UNDP TRAC*
  - iv. Field Coordinator (knowledge management) – *Full time funded by GEF (50%) and UNDP TRAC (50%)*
  - v. Field Coordinator (protected areas) – *Full time funded by GEF (50%) and UNDP TRAC (50%)*
- The PMU is technically supported by contracting national experts, international consultants and companies. The recruitment of specialist support services and procurement of any equipment and materials for the project is done by the PM with the support of the PMU, and in accordance with relevant recruitment and procurement rules and procedures of UNDP and of the government of Tajikistan.
- An *International Technical Advisor (ITA)*) was to be recruited to provide overall professional and technical backstopping to the project. The ITA would report directly to the PM (*This function was to be funded by the GEF funds*). No ITA has been recruited by the project. This issue was discussed at the November 9, 2018 PSC meeting. Considering the complexity of the project, which would have required a strong learning curve to be up to date on the project and its implementation as well as the experience of NBBC to implement/manage UNDP-GEF projects, the PSC decided not to hire an ITA as planned and to re-orient the ITA budget line of the GEF grant toward ad-hoc technical expertise needs.

87. The project is implemented under the “*UNDP Support Services to National Implementation Modality (NIM)*”. In this modality, UNDP may be requested to provide support services to nationally implemented projects, which must be done following UNDP rules and regulations. For this project, the provision of services was the object of a Letter of Agreement between the Government of Tajikistan represented by the Head of NBBC and UNDP signed on September 2, 2016. Within this agreement UNDP may provide at the request of NBBC services such as (i) recruitment of international consultant, (ii) facilitation of local and international travels, (iii) procurement of goods and services over USD 50,000, and (iv) financial support services. For all other procurement processes – i.e. below USD 50,000 - NBBC is fully accountable as the Implementing Partner. Furthermore, a delegation of authority was issued by NBBC #31 as of August 10, 2016 to make the Project Manager responsible for these procurement processes, following the rules and regulations stated in the Letter of Agreement. It includes the control of all processes related to the preparation of requests for quotation, specifications, selection, signing of contracts, payments, etc., which must be signed by the Project Manager. All payments are made by UNDP

88. The review indicates that the management arrangements as planned at the outset of the project are good and conducive for a day-to-day implementation of project activities. The project is implemented by a good technical team of professionals supported by national consultants/experts bringing together a broad range of skills and knowledge in protected area management, pasture and forestry management, biodiversity conservation, and local livelihood. Additionally, the fact that the PMU is based at NBBC is also an incentive for developing a good national ownership of the project and its achievements. The project also benefits from strong partnerships between government entities, particularly the CEP, the Forestry Agency (particularly the State Institution Specially Protected Natural Areas under this Agency), the Academy of Sciences, UNDP, regional and local government entities, and non-governmental organizations. The result of these collaborations is a project enjoying a good ownership by national Partners, which should contribute to the long-term sustainability of its achievements.

### **3.3.2. Stakeholder Engagement**

89. As per the project document, the project was formulated with the engagement of stakeholders at national and local levels but also donor agencies. During the Project Preparation Grant (PPG), numerous consultations occurred with all relevant stakeholders to discuss different aspects of project design. It included a series of bilateral discussions with national public institutions and multilateral agencies – notably the CEP, Forestry Agency, State Institution for Specially Protected Natural Areas, Academy of Sciences, GIZ and UNDP – to solicit information on the current project baseline, consult on proposed project interventions and confirm the political, administrative, operational and financial commitment of project partners (including securing co-financing commitments). It also included a series of consultative field visits and meetings with the relevant responsible institutions in the project's target areas, particularly in the Sangvor and Lakhsh regions to assess local challenges in situ, and consultatively identify prospective solutions. Finally, the project formulation team organized a consultative workshop to present the project and identify opportunities for synergies and collaboration; and a validation workshop to present the detailed project outputs, activities, budgets and implementation arrangements to all stakeholders with the circulation of the project documentation for review and comments.

90. Throughout this process, the project formulation team conducted a stakeholder analysis to identify key stakeholders, assess their respective roles and responsibilities and propose their role in implementing the project (*see Annex 10*). It resulted in the elaboration of a *Stakeholder Involvement Plan*, which has been part of the project document. It is an extensive plan to involve stakeholders in the implementation of this project. It includes the initial list of Stakeholders, sets the approach for stakeholder participation on the basis of principles<sup>7</sup> and detailed a stakeholder involvement plan, including:

- Project inception workshop to enable stakeholder awareness of the start of project implementation;
- Constitution of a PSC to ensure representation of stakeholder interests in project;
- Establishment of a PMU to oversee stakeholder engagement processes during project;
- Project communications to facilitate ongoing awareness of project;
- Stakeholder consultation and participation in project implementation to continue their engagement in the implementation of project supported activities;
- Formalization of structures to facilitate stakeholder involvement in project activities and ensure the ongoing participation of local and institutional stakeholders in project activities;
- Capacity building using use the services and facilities of existing local training and skills development institutions to contribute to the sustainability of project achievements.

91. The review conducted for this MTR indicates that a good framework had been designed for engaging stakeholders in the implementation of the project. Since the outset of the project, most activities are implemented with and for key stakeholders/beneficiaries. The Evaluation Team noted that the project implementation team collaborates with an extended list of stakeholders. The table below is a list of key Stakeholders engaged in implementing the project.

**Table 7: List of Stakeholders Engaged in the Implementation of the Project**

<b>Stakeholders</b>
<b>National Government Organizations / Counterparts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan;</li><li>• State Institution Specially Protected Natural Areas of the Forestry Agency under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan;</li><li>• Pasture Meliorative Trust under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Tajikistan;</li><li>• State Institution Research Laboratory for Nature protection of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan;</li></ul>

<sup>7</sup> These principles include: Value Adding, Inclusivity, Accessibility and Access, Transparency, Fairness, Accountability, Constructive, Redressing, Capacitating, Needs Based, Flexible, Rational and Coordinated, and Excellence.

Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Center on Implementation of National Environmental Action Plan of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.</li> </ul>
NGOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Organization “Noosfera”</li> <li>• International NGO “Panthera” (until August 2018)</li> <li>• NGO “Tabiat Pomir”,</li> <li>• Public Organization “Zanon dar Kuhhoi Pomir”</li> <li>• Association of Hunters of Tajikistan</li> <li>• Public Organization “Jamoat Resource Center Tagoba”</li> <li>• Public Organization “Jamoat Resource Center Khamroviyon”</li> <li>• Center for supporting Specially Protected Natural Areas of Tajikistan</li> <li>• Public Organization “Tabiat yoboi”</li> </ul>
NGOs and other entities engaged in SGP implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of public organizations “Saodat”,</li> <li>• Public organization “Kuhistoni Dashtijum”,</li> <li>• Public organization “Jamoat Resource Center Ivan Tojik”</li> <li>• Dehkan farm “Shodilang”</li> <li>• Dehkan farm “Marvorid”</li> <li>• Dehkan farm “Khojiyon-2011”</li> <li>• Dehkan farm “Siyovush”</li> <li>• Dehkan farm “Said Muhriddin”</li> <li>• Dehkan farm “Gairataly”</li> <li>• Dehkan farm “Rajabi”</li> <li>• Association of dehkan farms “Mirzo Abdullo”</li> </ul>

92. In addition to this list of partner organizations, the project also hires NGOs (through tender processes) to implement specific works when needed. Finally, the project has also been using the services of the UNDP area offices in Khujand, Ayni, Kulob and Rasht, mostly for monitoring procurement processes.

93. Stakeholders are well engaged in implementing activities. However, observations and interviews conducted for this MTR reveal that not enough communication is being done by the project to keep all project partners/stakeholders up to date about the overall progress of the project; including stakeholders at national level but particularly stakeholders at regional and local levels. One of the main mechanisms to communicate to stakeholders the overall project progress is the PSC. This body met five times since the inception of the project; however, it is not the best mechanism for communicating and exchanging technical progress made by the project. More is needed.

94. The PMU communicates with all stakeholders involved in implementing project activities; however, this communication is mostly focus on each particular activity at hand. As a result, the PMU has an excellent knowledge of the overall project and its progress; it is the main “*node*” at the center of the project accumulating a good body of knowledge. However, stakeholders are mostly on the “*periphery of this node*” and over time are not accumulating the same amount of knowledge – including best practices - on the overall project results. It prevents a more integrated approach with all stakeholders being up to date on all project activities and deliverables aiming at the “*conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods.*”.

95. In conclusion, the assessment conducted for this MTR reveals that stakeholders are well engaged in implementing the project. 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. However, in order to improve the exchange of information, best practices

and lessons learned among stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, it is recommended to increase the communication among stakeholders to spread more evenly the knowledge accumulated by the project over time.

### **3.3.3. Work Planning**

96. Project Annual Work Plans (AWPs) were produced every year from 2016. These AWPs were developed following UNDP project management guidelines, including the calendar year cycle (January to December for each year). Once finalized, these AWPs were reviewed and endorsed by the PSC and approved by NBBC and UNDP. These AWPs details the list of main activities to be conducted during the coming year following the structure of the log frame (objective, components, and outputs) of the project. For each activity, they include a tentative schedule (per quarter) when each activity will be implemented and a corresponding budget from the GEF grant and the UNDP TRAC contribution.

97. Based on the information collected, the Evaluation Team compared the budgeted annual work plans with the actual annual disbursements (GEF grant only), the results are presented in the table below:

**Table 8: Annual Work Plans versus Actual Expenditures (GEF grant)**

Years	AWP Budgets	Actual Expenditures	% Spent
<b>2016</b>	63,850	51,677	81%
<b>2017</b>	772,433	509,004	66%
<b>2018</b>	1,264,087	932,188	74%
<b>2019</b>	1,178,751	298,557 <sup>8</sup>	25%
<b>2020</b>	1,110,311	n/a	n/a

Sources: Project AWPs and UNDP-Atlas CDR Reports

98. Numbers presented in the table above reveal that work planning has not been too efficient since the start of the project in 2016. Actual expenditures have been under budget for all years from 2016 to 2018 included. Regarding 2019, as of end of October, only 25% of the approved AWP-2019 has been expended versus 83% of the time (10 months). When considering the remaining budget USD 880,194 (75%) for 2019 for the last 2 months of the year, project actual expenditures are projected to be much below the approved budget.

99. When considering the remaining GEF budget to be expended between November 2019 and August 2021, the yearly average of project expenditures would need to significantly increase for the entire GEF grant to be expended by August 2021. A quick calculation of the remaining GEF grant as of end of October 2019 indicates that the expenditures during the remaining 21 months of implementation should be about USD 1,365,682 per year; a significant increase over the previous years (a 47% increase over the 2018 actual expenditures). The review conducted for this MTR indicates that it is unlikely that this remaining budget will be spent by August 2021 (*see also Section 3.3.4 below*).

100. 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, when needed, the project implementation team has been using adaptive management to support activities through the best available “*channels*” to deliver activities and reach the intended results. The Evaluation Team also noted the good effort to engage stakeholders in implementing project supported activities, resulting in a good ownership of the project by stakeholders.

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

101. The project is implemented in line with the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between the Government of Tajikistan and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), signed by the parties on 1

8 To end of October 2019

October 1993. As discussed in Section 3.3.1, the implementation modality of the project to allocate, administer and report on project resources is the *UNDP Support Services to National Implementation Modality (NIM)*. The provision of support services was the object of a Letter of Agreement between the Government of Tajikistan represented by the Head of NBBC and UNDP signed on September 2, 2016. Furthermore, a delegation of authority was issued by NBBC #31 as of August 10, 2016 to make the Project Manager responsible for these procurement processes, following rules and regulations stated in the Letter of Agreement.

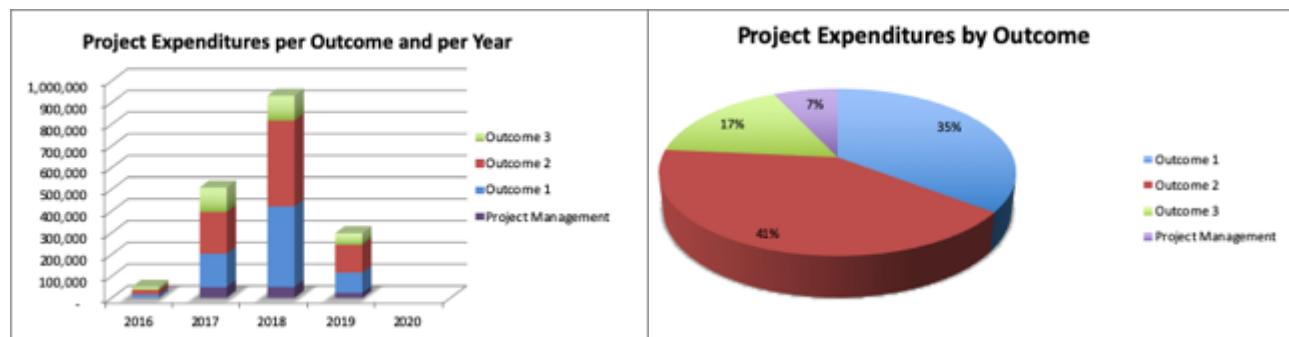
102. The result is that (i) UNDP provides services for procurement of goods and services over USD 50,000, process all project payments, and ensures conformance with UNDP Programme and Operational Policies and Procedures and UNDP Results-Based Management (RBM) guidelines; (ii) NBBC has full programmatic control for the implementation of the project; it is accountable to UNDP for the use of funds and the achievement of the project objective and outcomes, according to the approved work plans; and (iii) the PM is responsible for all procurement processes under USD 50,000 including the control of all processes related to the preparation of requests for quotation, specifications, selection, signing of contracts, payments, etc., which must be signed by the Project Manager.

103. 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 2016 to October 2019 (39 months) represent about 43% (USD 1,791,427) of the approved budget of USD 4,181,370 versus an elapsed time of 65% (39 months out of 60). The breakdown of project expenditures by outcome and by year is presented in the table below.

**Table 9: UNDP-GEF Project Funds Disbursement Status (GEF Grant in USD)**

Component / Outcome	Budget (USD)	2016	2017	2018	2019 <sup>9</sup>	Total (USD)	Total/Budget
<b>Component 1</b>	<b>1,890,657</b>	15,075	153,996	370,455	94,315	<b>633,841</b>	<b>33.5%</b>
<b>Component 2</b>	<b>1,355,700</b>	21,070	191,861	395,268	128,013	<b>736,212</b>	<b>54.3%</b>
<b>Component 3</b>	<b>735,900</b>	15,533	113,013	115,253	53,402	<b>297,201</b>	<b>40.4%</b>
<b>Project Management</b>	<b>199,113</b>	-	50,133	51,212	22,827	<b>124,173</b>	<b>62.4%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,181,370</b>	51,677	509,004	932,188	298,557	<b>1,791,427</b>	<b>42.8%</b>

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



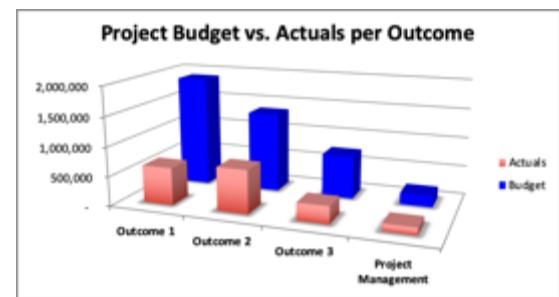
104. As discussed in section 3.3.3, these financial figures indicate a relatively low disbursement rate by the project. With a project starting date of August 2016, the project expended USD 1,791,427 to the end of October 2019 that is 43% of the GEF grant versus 65% of the project timeline (39 months out of 60 months). As of November 1, 2019, the remaining budget from the GEF grant is USD 2,389,943 (57%). When considering the timeline left for implementing the project (21 months), it is doubtful that the entire budget will be expended by August 2021. The average monthly disbursement for the remaining period of 21 months needs to be USD 113,807 to totally expend the GEF grant. Using the average monthly disbursement of the first 39 months of USD 45,934 as a benchmark, the disbursements during the remaining implementation period needs to be equal to two and half (2.5) time the current monthly expenditures (USD 45,934). It is not impossible to achieve but

<sup>9</sup> Figures for 2019 are from January to October 2019.

it requires a drastic change in managing and administering the project with a significant increase of project activities and disbursements to reach this average.

105. Nevertheless, the project is moving ahead with its implementation plan. Based on the financial assessment of the project conducted for this MTR, it is anticipated that the GEF grant may not be totally expended by August 2021. In the case this situation becomes a reality, the Evaluation Team recommends a no-cost time extension to consolidate project achievements.

106. The review of project expenditures against budgets per component/outcome indicates an unequal level of disbursements. The table above and the diagram indicate that almost 34% of the budget for component 1 (Strengthening Protected Areas Management) has been expended to October 2019. A higher percentage of disbursements was noted for component 2 (Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity) with over 54%, and also for component 3 (International cooperation) with almost 17%. This disbursement profile is in line with the analysis conducted in section 3.2.1.



107. In the meantime, over 62% of the project management budget has been spent, which represents a ratio of just under 7% of the total expenditures to October 2019. This current ratio is almost one and a half times the planned ratio of 4.8% allocated to project management at the formulation stage. It is mostly due to the fact that the project is under spending on project activities. If disbursements continue to be lower than planned, the project management expenditures would need to be monitored carefully during the remaining implementation period to be in line with the budgeted ratio of 4.8% of total expenditures.

108. Finally, the Evaluation Team reviewed the financial audits conducted by independent auditors for the years 2017 and 2018. Auditors reviewed the Combined Delivery Reports (CDRs – statement of expenses) for each year; which are also those used to produce the table 9 above. The opinions of both audits are that “*the statements of expenses present fairly, in all material respects, the expense incurred by the project*”.

### ***Co-financing***

109. Co-financing commitments at the outset of the project totaled the amount of USD 19,610,000 (*see table below*), which represented about 82% of the total amount of the financial resources required in the project document of USD 23,791,370 (GEF grant + co-financing) for the implementation of the project. All pledged amounts listed in the table below were supported by co-financing letters and are part of the project document.

**Table 10: Co-financing Status**

Partner	Type	Commitments (USD)
National Government	In-kind	10,000,000
Local Government	In-kind	1,200,000
UNDP Parallel co-financing	Parallel	6,000,000
UNDP TRAC	Cash	410,000
International NGO	In-kind	500,000
Private Sector	In-kind	1,500,000
<b>Total (USD)</b>		<b>19,610,000</b>

*Source: Project Document*

110. The table indicates that 57% of this co-financing was pledged by the national and local governments of Tajikistan. A further 8% was from the private sector and 2.5% from an international NGO (Panthera). The rest (33%) was pledged by UNDP with 2% in cash and 31% as parallel financing from 2 UNDP Tajik-Afghan cross-border projects.

111. At the time of the MTR, limited reporting has been made on co-financing contributions. No information on co-financing reporting from national and local stakeholders were obtained by the Evaluation Team. Regarding UNDP-TRAC contribution, the disbursed amount logged in the Atlas system for this project as of end of October 2019 is USD 236,256 or about 57% of their commitment (USD 410,000) at the outset of the project. In order to complete the actual figures for the overall financing of this project (GEF grant + co-financing), it is recommended that the project implementation team reviews the commitment made by the national and local stakeholders and request yearly co-financing reports.

112. In the meantime, the Evaluation Team confirmed that these Partners have contributed critical resources to the implementation of project activities, particularly NBBC as the Implementing Partner of the project and local governments (Jamoats and Leskhozes) often as beneficiaries of project activities. As discussed in previous sections, project activities are being implemented with and for the relevant stakeholders, including regional and local institutions. The challenge is to get co-financial figures corresponding to these participations in project activities.

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

113. A good M&E plan was developed during the formulation of the project – including sex disaggregated indicators - in accordance with standard UNDP and GEF procedures. A budget of USD 102,000 was allocated to M&E, representing about 2.4% of the GEF grant. The Evaluation Team noted that, during the inception phase, minor changes were made to the set of indicators and targets to be used to measure the performance of the project. The M&E budget was also slightly revised from USD 102,000 to USD 96,000 due to a lower cost of the inception workshop. These changes were documented in the inception report.

114. A summary of the M&E plan operating modalities are as follows:

- *Performance indicators:* A set of 27 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 November 4, 2016 in Dushanbe. The project design was explained in detail, including the *Strategic Results Framework* and the available resources for implementing the project. Discussions were facilitated on roles and responsibilities of the *Implementing Agency*, the *Implementing Partner*, other partners/stakeholders and the *Project Implementation Team*. The 2017 annual work plan was reviewed and endorsed. Finally, few minor changes as discussed in the paragraph above were proposed and endorsed by the PSC. The inception phase was concluded by this workshop and documented in the inception report.
- *Quarterly Progress Reports:* Quarterly progress reports were planned to monitor the progress and record it in the UNDP Enhanced Results Based Management Platform. Risks have also been 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 Manager to the PSC, using a UNDP/GEF template for project progress reporting. These APRs/PIRs includes a summary of results achieved against the overall targets identified in the project document (Development Objective (DO)); and a summary of deliverables implemented during the reporting period (Implementation Progress (IP)). They follow the GEF annual cycle of July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> for each year.
- *Periodic Monitoring through Site Visits:* UNDP Country Office has been conducting visits to project sites to assess firsthand project progress. Field Visit Reports were prepared and circulated to the project implementation 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 PSC meeting and will follow UNDP and GEF evaluation guidelines. The GEF's tracking tools were completed for the MTR and will be updated before 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 though 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 have been conducted in accordance with UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules and applicable audit policies on UNDP projects and funded through UNDP-TRAC funds for 2017 and 2018.

115. The revised set of indicators presented in the *Strategic Results Framework* and documented in the inception report was reviewed during this review. It includes a set of 27 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 component /outcome levels. The list of indicators and targets is presented in the table below. Text highlighted in green are the changes made during the inception phase.

**Table 11: List of Performance Indicators**

Objective & Outcomes	Indicators	Targets
<b>Project Objective:</b> Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods.	1. Extend of protected areas under a secure, and effectively managed, monitoring and enforcement regime 2. Extent of high-altitude grasslands (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh- Darvaz areas under a regulated and sustainable management regime 3. Extent of high-altitude forest (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas under a sustainable management regime 4. Number of primary snow leopard prey populations 5. Total snow leopard population in Tajikistan 6. Number of individuals (number of women as a proportion of the total) <b>Number of women (as a proportion of the total)</b> involved in, and directly benefiting from project investments in the conservation and sustainable use of snow leopard, snow leopard prey and snow leopard habitats:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &gt;427,400ha</li> <li>• &gt;100,000 ha</li> <li>• &gt;15,000 ha</li> <li>• &gt;1,400 Marco Polo Sheep (NT), • &gt;5,000 Siberian Ibex (LC), and • &gt;1,400 Heptner's markhor (EN)</li> <li>• &gt;220</li> <li>• Involvement: &gt;2000 (&gt;60%) • Direct benefits: &gt;450 (&gt;60%)</li> </ul>
<b>Component 1 –</b> Conservation and sustainable management of key biodiversity areas  • <b>Output 1.1:</b> Secure the conservation status and boundaries of protected areas  • <b>Output 1.2:</b> Develop the capacity to implement a	7. Total extent of IUCN Category I and Category II protected areas 8. Total annual budget allocation for the management of IUCN Category I – IV protected areas 9. METT scores for: Tajik NP (Lakhsh section) Tajik NP (Sangvor section, including Sangvor) 10. Number of active patrol rangers in the Lakhsh and Sangvor (including Sangvor) sections of Tajik NP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,837,018 ha</li> <li>• &gt;US\$450,000/annum</li> <li>• Lakhsh: 44, • Sangvor: 40</li> <li>• Lakhsh: 18, • Sangvor: 16</li> </ul>

Objective & Outcomes	Indicators	Targets
smart patrolling system in protected areas  • <b>Output 1.3:</b> Improve the equipment and infrastructure to support the implementation of a smart patrol system in protected areas  • <b>Output 1.4:</b> Enhance community involvement in, and beneficiation from, protected areas	11. Extent (as a percentage of the total area) of Lakhsh and Sangvor (including Sangvor) sections of Tajik NP under a secure and effective monitoring and enforcement regime  12. Number of (i) poaching of snow leopard and prey; and (ii) other illegal (encroachments for crops and grazing, wood harvesting) incidents recorded (and prosecuted) per annum by ranger patrol staff from the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP  13. Number of individuals from targeted villages directly involved in (proportion of women), and financially benefiting from (proportion of women), the management of the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP:	• Lakhsh: >85%, • Sangvor: >60%  • (i) <5 (4)/annum • (ii) <60 (40) /annum  • Involvement in: >2000 (>1,100) • Direct financial beneficiation from: >150 (>80)
<b>Component 2 – Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in wider landscape outside protected areas.</b>  • <b>Output 2.1:</b> Reduce impacts on, and improve the management of, livestock pastures  • <b>Output 2.2:</b> Reduce impacts on, and improve the management of, forests  • <b>Output 2.3:</b> Strengthen wildlife monitoring and enforcement capacities	14. Number of days of use of high-altitude pastures in the Hissar- Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas  15. Productivity (tons/ha) [dry fodder mass in tons/ha] of the high-altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas  16. Percentage (as an average of the total grass/forb/herb cover per hectare) of palatable and edible species for ungulates and livestock in the high-altitude pastures of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas  17. Number of Pasture User Unions (PUUs) with approved pasture management plans under implementation in the high-altitude pastures of the Hissar- Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas  18. Number of households in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas directly benefiting from project technical and grant funding support for	• Spring & autumn 45-55 days • Summer: 60-70 days  • >1 t/ha  • >50%  • >10  • Implementation of sustainable pasture management practices: >40 • Adoption of alternative fuel and energy technologies: >10 • Community ranger pilot projects: 5
	19. Extent of degraded high-altitude pastures and forests of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh- Darvaz areas under active rehabilitation or restoration  20. Number of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) committees actively involved in the planning, management and monitoring of high-altitude forests of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh- Darvaz areas  21. Number of individuals involved in wildlife monitoring and enforcement training and skills development programmes	• Pastures: 10,000 ha • Forests: 6,000 ha  • >3  • >100/annum
<b>Component 3 – Support to international cooperation</b>  • <b>Output 3.1:</b> Enhance the state of knowledge on snow leopard and prey populations  • <b>Output 3.2:</b> Improve the coordination of, and cooperation in, snow	22. Establishment and maintenance of:  23. National coverage (as a % of the total snow leopard range) of snow leopard and prey monitoring activities	• (i) national snow leopard Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system; • (ii) national snow leopard Information Management (IM) system  • Snow leopard: >25% • Prey: >20%

Objective & Outcomes	Indicators	Targets
leopard conservation and monitoring	24. National Action Plan for snow leopard conservation.	• Approved and implemented
	25. Number of managers, scientists, researchers and academics participating in: (i) regional snow leopard and prey conservation initiatives; and (ii) regional monitoring and report-back meetings	• (i) 15 • (ii) 10
	26. Number of meetings per annum of the (i) <b>National Environment Security Task Force (NEST)</b> ; (ii) National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee	• 2 ((i) 4 (ii) 5)
	27. Number of trans-boundary agreements (Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, China, Kyrgyzstan) addressing collaboration in the management of wildlife crime under implementation	• 3

Source: Project Document and PIRs

116. This set of 27 indicators and their respective targets 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 “*Extent of high-altitude forest (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas under a sustainable management regime*” or “*Number of individuals involved in wildlife monitoring and enforcement training and skills development programmes*”, and few of those indicators are quality-based indicators. Furthermore, some of these indicators are not relevant enough to measure progress at the outcome/component and objective levels. It is the case for those indicators tracking numbers of meetings such as ”*Number of meetings per annum of the National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee*”.

117. 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. They can measure the skills developed for relevant stakeholders, the procedures and mechanisms developed within relevant institutions and measure the relevance of the enabling environment in place (Laws, policies and programmes). For example, measuring the number of meetings per annum of the national snow leopard conservation committee does not really provide any indication that this committee has performed as it should beside providing the number of times the committee met over time. Qualitative indicators would better measure the performance of this committee focusing more on the expected results of this committee. Finally, 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.

118. In the case of capacity development initiatives such as this project - that is the “*Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods*” - 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.

119. Overall, the review of these indicators indicates that some of them could be SMART 10... er! Most of them are specific enough, measurable, attainable and time bound. However, the lack of indicators to measure the degree of capacities being developed with the support of the project render this set of indicators and targets not fully relevant. This M&E framework is much focused on surface areas to be covered by the project (number of ha), on the number of participants benefitting from project activities and on the number of meetings as opposed to focusing more on the development of new knowledge created and on capacities of stakeholders/beneficiaries developed. Nevertheless, 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

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

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 most of its targets by August 2021.

### **3.3.6. Reporting**

120. Management reports have been produced according to UNDP project management guidelines. They include AWPs that when finalized have been endorsed by the PSC and annual APRs/PIRs (Annual Progress Reports/Project Implementation Reviews). The Evaluation Team was able to collect the 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 AWPs, and the APR/PIRs for 2018 and 2019. 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 indicators and targets set at the outset of the project (*see Section 3.3.5*). These annual reports include also a review and update of risks identified at the outset of the project and the steps taken to mitigate these risks when rated as critical; no risks have been reported as critical since the inception of the project.

121. The ratings given in APRs/PIRs were also reviewed. The progress made against the overall progress toward the Development Objective (DO) has been rated as *Moderately Satisfactory (MS)* in both the 2018 and 2019 APR/PIRs. However, when reviewing the individual ratings given for both the progress toward the Development Objective and the implementation progress (IP), the Evaluation Team noted few differences. The PM and the project implementing partner (NBBC) rated the progress toward the DO as *Satisfactory (S)* and the GEF Operational Focal Point rated the progress toward the DO as *Highly Satisfactory (HS)* in 2018 and *Satisfactory (S)* in 2019. UNDP Country Office and the UNDP-GEF Technical Advisor rated both the progress toward the DO and the Implementation Progress (IP) as *Moderately Satisfactory (MS)* for both years 2018 and 2019. All these ratings were well justified by each “*role*” in the respective APR/PIR. Based on the review conducted for this MTR, the project has certainly the potential to be overall *Satisfactory* by its end.

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

122. Communication and knowledge management functions are not “embedded” in the project strategy (*Strategic Results Framework*); i.e. they are not part of the expected results/deliverables. As a result, they are not part of the performance monitoring of the project; no indicators are tracking communication activities. However, they are 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.

123. Despite this plan for communicating project results, lessons learned and best practices, the Evaluation Team noted that no budget was planned for this activity in the M&E plan. However, the guidance provided in the project document for implementing activities under *output 1.4 Enhance community involvement in, and beneficiation from, protected areas* is clear. It states “*the PMU will contract a communications media company to design and publish all information and educational materials and media, and to develop the materials for the information and awareness-raising ‘road shows’ around each section of Tajik NP*” and a budget under component 1 was planned to recruit a communication company.

124. The review conducted for this MTR found that the project implementation team has been excellent in producing information products and communicating this information to raise awareness of stakeholders and beneficiaries and overall to emphasize the visibility of the project and its objectives. It certainly complies with the communications and visibility requirements of such project, including the *UNDP Branding Guidelines* and the *GEF Communication and Visibility Guidelines*.

125. The first step done by the implementation team has been to formulate a communication strategy. It contains 6 main objectives and its aim is to disseminate information on the project, its progress, lessons learned and best practices; and also, to contribute to raising awareness of targeted groups on the conservation and sustainable use of snow leopard ecosystems, including hunting facilities. Targeted groups include a broad

range of stakeholders: state environmental institutions, research institutes, environmental public organizations, national and international NGOs, local governments, Jamoats, hunting farms, forest management committees, pasture user unions and farms and other projects. The action plan of this strategy included: seminars, training targeting various groups such as farmers, scientists, specialists, etc., documentary films, radio and TV programmes, printed information products, books, CD-ROM, conferences and summer ecology programmes for students and children. In order to maintain regular coverage of project's topics by media, activities have been linked to special days such as biodiversity day, snow leopard day, environmental day, etc.

126. As a result of this communication strategy, the project has produced and disseminated a broad range of communication products and activities including brochures, newsletters, factsheets, posters, presentations, etc. It also includes radio and TV programmes on snow leopard and their habitat/ecosystems, focusing on raising public awareness on the importance of these ecosystems. Other specific communication activities implemented include a two-day training course for bloggers, media representatives and NGOs on photography technology and information materials, with a focus on wildlife and its facilities. A press tour to the Pamir area. The material collected during this tour was then used for an exhibition presented on the *Eradication of Poverty Day* in Dushanbe. A story about the role of women in conservation efforts was published on the UNDP Eurasia webpage and twitter. The Marco Polo Museum (argali) was established at the regional CEP office in the Murgab district with the support of the project to support the cultural and natural status of rare species of wild animals. Finally, the project supported the organization of the “*Knowledge Week for Conservation of the Snow Leopard in Tajikistan*”, which started on International Snow Leopard Day. The week of events included exhibitions, masterclasses, activities for children, etc.



127. Related to the development of these communication/information products, the Evaluation Team noted two critical government decisions made in 2018: Protocol #9 of August 30, 2018 and Protocol #12 of November 29, 2018. These two Protocols provided the necessary government authorization to pursue with activities to conserve snow leopards; document (observations, photos and videos) snow leopards in their habitat; and produce souvenir for tourists on snow leopard and their preys.

128. Among all these communication activities, observations and interviews conducted for this MTR reveal that TV programmes aired with the support of the project stand-out in term of raising awareness of local communities. Many stakeholders interviewed during the visits to project sites mentioned these programmes as being excellent in raising awareness of local communities. These programmes have not been evaluated but they seem to have strike a chord, particularly with local communities in high-mountain areas in Tajikistan. Traditionally, the snow leopard is a natural symbol and pride of Tajikistan and these TV programmes have been a reminder of the importance of snow leopard within these ecosystems but also in the local culture of these communities. It is recommended to review these programmes and assess the possibility to support more of these programmes.

#### **SNOW LEOPARD - A NATURAL SYMBOL AND PRIDE OF TAJIKISTAN**

In Tajikistan, there are many legends and stories about the Snow Leopard. In traditions and legends of the Tajik people proudly mentioned the symbol of noble, purity of moral and courage. Virtually, none of the legend about heroic deeds of warriors and hunters among the mountain people of Tajikistan can exist without participation of the Snow Leopard. Nightly in mountain villages in Central and Eastern Tajikistan (Badakhshan) local people begin exciting stories saying about the Snow Leopard and complete them mentioning the noble predator. ....

*Excerpt from "Save National Heritage of Tajikistan!"*

129. As a result of these communication products and activities, the Evaluation Team 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 Tajikistan.

### 3.4. Sustainability

130. 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.

131. Project risks were identified at the formulation stage and documented in the project document; including the mitigation measures for each identified risk. It included a list of 4 risks. These risks were reviewed during the inception phase and resulted in updated mitigative measures, one risk assessment updated and two additional risks for a total of 6 risks, which were documented in the inception report and are presented in the table below. Risks in green are those identified during the inception phase.

**Table 12:** List of Risks Identified at the outset of the project

Project Risks	Risk Assessment
1. State institutions responsible for the administration of protected areas, pastures and forests do not have adequate capacity, or demonstrate the necessary political will, to support, maintain and enforce working agreements with rural pasture user groups, forest user groups and communities living adjacent to SPNAs	<b>Medium (High)</b>
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.	<b>Medium</b>
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	<b>Medium</b>
4. The increasing aridisation of high-altitude habitats, as a result of the effects of climate change, results in more intensive and extensive grazing pressures on high altitude pastures, potentially leading to the local extirpation of snow leopard and medium-sized prey.	<b>Low</b>
5. Complex global and regional trends of financial crises 2015-2016 affected the national banking system of Tajikistan, that became particularly evident in key systemically important bank branches across the country <sup>11</sup>	<b>Medium</b>
6. High-tech smart software globally developed for organization of anti-poaching patrolling has extremely complex parameters, which makes it difficult to adapt to the conditions of Tajikistan	<b>Medium</b>

Source: Project Document, Inception Report and UNDP-Atlas Risk Log.

132. Since the outset of the project, the project implementation team has been monitoring these risks and particularly those with a high-risk level (4). Project risks are logged and monitored/updated regularly in the UNDP-Atlas system. As per the reporting guidelines for annual progress reports (APRs/PIRs), risks are to be reported as critical when the impact and probability are high under section *E - Critical Risk Management*. In the 2018 and 2019 APRs/PIRs no critical risks were reported.

133. The review of these risks and their respective risk assessments reveal that there are covering key aspects of the project where issues can arise, and the level of risk significance is appropriate. It includes the risk related to capacities needed within the state institutions directly responsible for the administration of protected areas, pastures and forests to ensure the sustainability of project achievements. It is an issue related to the broad scope of the project and which was already discussed in section 3.2.1 of this report. As of the time of this MTR, the Evaluation Team concurs with the risk assessment for this risk rated as medium.

134. Within the context of these risks, the Evaluation Team 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 a good national ownership with government and non-government entities as well as with local communities, which also contribute to mitigating most of these risks.

11 Risks in green were added in the inception report.

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

135. There are some financial risks to the sustainability of some project achievements. As discussed in section 1 of this report, one barrier to the implementation of the NAPCSL is the limited government resources allocated to the management and conservation of the protected area system in Tajikistan. According to some interviews conducted for this MTR, the national budget allocation to the SPNAs is hardly enough to cover staff salaries and no allocation is made to cover transportation expenses and expenses to undertake any conservation, rehabilitation, reforestation activities. Furthermore, in order to secure the implementation of project activities targeting protected areas, the project entered into an agreement with the forestry department to finance salaries of some Rangers on a 50/50 basis. Finally, the project also supported the procurement of equipment for Rangers to facilitate their fieldwork and better monitor and surveil fauna and flora within their protected areas.

136. This support has been much appreciated as, for the most part, this government sector is underfunded. It allows project activities to be carried out with the required resources. However, once the project will end, financial resources will be needed to keep the Rangers employed, to maintain this equipment from time to time and at times to replace it. There will also be the need for the government to support some of these new activities such as the Snow Leopard Monitoring and Reporting system, the maintenance of the SLIMS and the SMART patrol system and ultimately the implementation of conservation and rehabilitation measures. As it stands currently, there is a risk of a lack of financial resources to support these ongoing activities after the project end. So far, the government is committed to the project objective. Monitoring the snow leopard population is the main objective of the NAPCSL. It is expected that the government will continue to support the project achievements with the necessary financial resources from the national budget and possibly from other funding sources. In the meantime, in order to facilitate the sustainability of project achievements and the transition at the end of the project, it is recommended to prepare a project exit strategy, identifying what, when, where and how much some activities need to be continued.

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

137. 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 and the micro-grant scheme, supporting 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, it should nevertheless have positive socio-economic impacts on local livelihoods.

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

138. 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 in high-mountain snow leopard ecosystems in Tajikistan. The project is “rooted” in national priorities; it is particularly aligned with the *National Action Plan for Conservation of Snow Leopard in Tajikistan (NAPCSL)*. The project has been supporting capacity development activities to strengthen institutions and governance systems dealing with the management of biodiversity, pastures and forest in Tajikistan. Training has been provided on several topics related to biodiversity conservation, high-mountain ecosystem resilience, habitat connectivity, livelihood of local communities, and snow leopard conservation and monitoring. 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 Tajikistan. The good engagement of stakeholders should also contribute to the sustainability of project results in the institutional and governance areas. Overall, once the project will be completed, Tajikistan should be better equipped for managing/conserving its high-mountain ecosystems.

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

139. 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, sub-national and local stakeholders to implement these measures. Ultimately, the achievements of the project that is the "*conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods*", should have a medium and long-term positive environmental impact over the natural resources in the project areas. 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 Tajikistan.

140. The project is well aligned with national priorities as well as with UNDP and GEF-6 focal areas strategies. Currently, it is a key programming instrument to implement its draft *National Action Plan for Conservation of Snow Leopard in Tajikistan (NAPCSL)*. It is a direct response to national priorities by: (i) preventing the further fragmentation of snow leopard and prey landscapes in Tajikistan; (ii) maintaining and/or restoring the quality of key snow leopard and prey habitats within these landscapes; (iii) improving the conservation status, and sustainability of pasture and forest use, in these key snow leopard and prey habitats; and (iv) reducing the direct threats to the survival of snow leopards and prey populations living in these key habitats. The project will contribute to the removal of three key barriers: a) Limited resources for, and capabilities in, the planning and management of SPNAs; (b) Unsustainable land use management practices outside the SPNAs; and (c) Incomplete information and knowledge management systems for management decision making and trans-boundary cooperation.

##### b) A complex ambitious project but well documented in the project document used as a “blue-print”.

141. It is an ambitious project with a broad scope and covering large geographical areas, but well formulated and well documented in the project document. The project strategy presents an articulated set of expected results with a good logical “*chain of results*”: activities → outputs → outcomes → objective. This document has been very useful for the project implementation team; it is used as a “blue-print” by the team. The project focuses on four strategic intervention areas: (i) improving the conservation of specially protected nature areas (SPNAs) and community-based conservancies; (ii) improving the sustainable management of pasture lands across the snow leopard range and reducing conflicts between pastoralists and snow leopards and their preys; (iii) improving the ecological integrity of forests in the snow leopard range; and (iv) expanding the reach of research, monitoring and planning efforts about snow leopards, their preys and their habitats.

#### *Progress Towards Results*

##### c) The progress made by the project so far is satisfactory.

142. The implementation adheres to the project strategy detailed in the project document. Overall, the project has made good progress so far under its three components/outcomes and it has 21 more months of implementation. It is expected that the project should be completed by its end. Progress highlights under each outcome include:

- **Under Outcome 1** the project has been focusing on strengthening the capacity to manage protected areas. Regarding the Sangvor section, the project supported the process to officialize this area as part of the TNP. The project also supported the installation of four checkpoints at the entrance of the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections. It also provided some equipment such as cars and motorcycles as well as horses, donkeys and GPS in some areas. The project supported the organization of workshops on smart patrol system and snow leopard ecosystems monitoring in protected areas. Finally, under this component, the project supported the development of a concept (policy) for wildlife monitoring.
- **Under Outcome 2** the project has focused on the resilience of ecosystems and the connectivity of habitats in wider landscape outside protected areas. In collaboration with livestock owners, the project has been seeking to reduce the number of days of high-altitude summer pastures in the Hissar- Alay and

Vakhsh-Darvaz areas by providing hay (fodder) and gas balloons/cooking facilities to pastoralists/shepherds to reduce pressure (deforestation and overgrazing) on these ecosystems. Awareness raising activities took place through workshops, and a programme aired on national TV. It has also included activities to increase the productivity of these areas by planting forage crops for livestock to rehabilitate degraded pastures; and to monitor palatable and edible species for ungulates and livestock available in these types of pastures. So far, the project has supported the establishment of 3 Pasture User Unions (PUUs), and each one has prepared its own pasture management plan. The project has also involved local communities in sustainable pasture management, fuel and energy technologies and in piloting community rangers with the provision of technical assistance and grant funding. Finally, the project has provided equipment to support the rehabilitation of high-altitude pastures and forests.

- **Under Outcome 3** the project has been supporting the development of a Snow Leopard Information Management System (SLIMS) to monitor the population of snow leopards and their prey species in protected areas; as well as the standardization and methodology for monitoring – including counting – the population of snow leopards. The project also supported the purchase and installation of camera traps in multiple protected areas to monitor the population of snow leopard and their preys. This equipment has been used to start monitoring activities. The project also promoted an ecotourism route “*In the Footsteps of Snow Leopard*” to contribute to improving the livelihood of local communities. The project also contributed to the drafting of the *National Action Plan for Conservation of Snow Leopard in Tajikistan (NAPCSL)* to enable synergies with the GSLEP and to include transboundary cooperation and adaptation to climate change for conservation of snow leopard ecosystems activities. Based on this action plan, activities aimed at monitoring and assessment of high-altitude ecosystems, training on patrolling and data collection were completed and reported during Snow Leopard Conservation Committee meetings. Finally, the project has also been involved in drafting a Memorandum and Action Plan on joint actions for the conservation of snow leopards’ landscapes in Western Tien Shan and Pamir Alay (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan). This draft memo is being discussed/reviewed by these government and should be signed in the coming months.

**d) The project strategy should have a positive impact on the conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan snow leopard ecosystems; but the challenge of integrating all project interventions remains.**

143. As a result of project activities, Tajikistan should be better equipped with management skills and tools to better manage its protected areas, including a greater patrolling capacity of Rangers to protect and conserve these areas, and capacity to monitor illegal hunting and poaching. It should also be better equipped with skills, knowledge and equipment to manage and monitor high-altitude mountain pastures and forest, while sustaining livelihood of local communities, and finally relevant institutions should be better equipped to monitor and manage the information on the population of snow leopards and their preys as well as to have a transboundary programming framework for the conservation of snow leopard landscapes. The overall strategy of the project should have a positive impact on the conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan snow leopard ecosystems. However, the remaining challenge is to bring all project interventions together and demonstrate how to improve the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in this type of ecosystems, including pasture management, forest management, protected areas management, snow leopard conservation and sustainable livelihood of local communities. A challenging proposition!

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

144. Despite the good progress made by the project since its outset and the prognostic that the project will achieve its targets by the end of its life, a critical question is “will activities implemented during the lifetime of the project be enough to ensure the sustainability of project achievements?” Project supported activities have strengthened the management of protected areas and overall have developed the capacity to conserve and manage high-altitude mountain ecosystems. The project has been developing capacities in many areas and more of these activities will take place between now and the end of the project. Some project achievements should be sustained over the long-term such as the change of status of the Sangvor section; the development of the NAPCSL once approved by the government; or the use of wildlife monitoring equipment. They are becoming part of the official instruments to manage, monitor and surveil the natural capital in Tajikistan. 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 of relevant institutions are less obvious. Good progress has been made so far, but will it be enough to sustain the new approaches to conserve and manage these high-mountain ecosystems and produce a lasting positive change in biodiversity conservation and in illegal wildlife trade? A focus on these aspects is recommended for the remaining implementation period of the project. The long-term impact of the project depends greatly on the sustainability of these project achievements.

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

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

145. The management arrangements of the project are good and conducive for a good day-to-day implementation of project activities. The project is implemented by a good technical team of professionals supported by national consultants/experts bringing together a broad range of skills and knowledge in protected area management, pasture and forestry management, biodiversity conservation, and local livelihood. Additionally, the fact that the PMU is based at NBBC is also an incentive for developing a good national ownership of the project and its achievements. The project also benefits from strong partnerships between government entities, particularly the CEP, the Forestry Agency (particularly the State Institution Specially Protected Natural Areas under this Agency), the Academy of Sciences, UNDP, regional and local government entities, and non-governmental organizations. The result of these collaborations is a project enjoying a good ownership by national Partners, which should contribute to the long-term sustainability of its achievements.

#### **g) The project enjoys a good engagement of stakeholders but a greater communication on project progress and results is needed.**

146. Following a well detailed *Stakeholder Involvement Plan* formulated at the outset of the project, the participative and collaborative approach used by the project implementation team has been conducive for a good engagement of stakeholders. As a result, the project collaborates with an extended list of stakeholders, which certainly contributes to a good national ownership of the project and which also will be contributing to the sustainability of project achievements over the long-term. However, in order to strengthen this engagement, the project would need to increase the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned among stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, to spread more evenly the knowledge accumulated by the project over time.

#### **h) The disbursements of the GEF grant is slower than the project elapsed time (43% vs. 65%) and the full grant may not be expended by August 2021.**

147. As of end of October 2019, total expenditures amount to about USD 1.8M representing about 43% of the GEF grant versus an elapsed time of 65% (39 months out of 60). It has a remaining budget from the GEF grant of USD 2,389,943 (57%) for the remaining period of implementation. So far, 34% of the budget for outcome 1 (Strengthening Protected Areas Management) has been expended, 54% of the outcome 2 (Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity) budget and 40% of the outcome 3 (International cooperation) budget. 62% of the budget for project management has been expended, representing a ratio of 7% of total expenditures so far. When considering the timeline left for implementing the project (21 months), it is doubtful that the entire budget will be expended by August 2021. From an average monthly disbursement of USD 45,934 so far, the project would need to multiply its disbursement rate by 2.5 times to reach an average monthly disbursement to USD 113,807 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.

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

148. Co-financing commitments at the outset of the project totaled USD 19,610,000, which represented about 82% 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: 57% of this co-financing was pledged by the national and local governments of Tajikistan, 8% by the private sector and 2.5% by an international NGO (Panthera). The rest (33%) was pledged by UNDP with 2% in cash (USD 410,000) and 31% as parallel financing from 2 UNDP Tajik-Afghan cross-border projects. So far, limited reporting has been

made available to the project 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.

**j) The monitoring framework in place is workable and it is used annually to report progress made by the project.**

149. Most indicators are specific enough, measurable, attainable and time bound. However, most of these quantitative indicators do not measure well the degree of capacities being developed rendering the set of indicators and targets not fully relevant. This M&E framework is much focused on surface areas to be covered by the project (number of ha), on the number of participants benefitting from project activities and on the number of meetings as opposed to focusing more on the development of new knowledge created and on capacities of stakeholders/beneficiaries developed. Nevertheless, 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 M&E framework to annually report progress made by the project. As it stands currently, it is expected that the project will meet most of its targets by August 2021.

**k) Communication activities and knowledge management are excellent and provide a good visibility of the project at national/regional/local levels and contribute to raising awareness of local communities.**

150. The project has produced excellent information products and communicating this information to raise awareness of stakeholders and beneficiaries and overall to emphasize the visibility of the project and its objective. It certainly complies with the communications and visibility requirements of such project, including the *UNDP Branding Guidelines* and the *GEF Communication and Visibility Guidelines*. The project has produced and disseminated a broad range of communication products and activities including brochures, newsletters, factsheets, posters, presentations, etc. It also includes radio and TV programmes on snow leopard and their habitat/ecosystems, focusing on raising public awareness on the importance of these ecosystems. All these communication products and activities have contributed to the dissemination of knowledge on Snow Leopard conservation and biodiversity conservation throughout Tajikistan.

151. Noteworthy are these TV programmes aired with the support of the project to raise awareness of local communities. There are highly rated by local communities in raising awareness about the importance of these ecosystems and their sustainable use. These programmes seem to have strike a chord, particularly with local communities in high-mountain areas in Tajikistan. Traditionally, the snow leopard is a natural symbol and pride of Tajikistan and these TV programmes have been a reminder of the importance of snow leopard within these ecosystems but also in the local culture of these communities.

### **Sustainability**

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

152. 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. Government resources allocated to the management and conservation of the protected area system in Tajikistan is limited. Within this context, the project entered into an agreement with the forestry department to finance salaries of some Rangers on a 50/50 basis to secure the implementation of project activities in protected areas. In addition, the project also supported the procurement of equipment for Rangers to facilitate their fieldwork and better monitor and surveil fauna and flora within their protected areas. This support has been much appreciated; however, once the project will end, financial resources will be needed to keep the Rangers employed, to maintain this equipment from time to time and at times to replace it. The Forestry Department will also need to support some of these new activities such as the Snow Leopard Monitoring and Reporting system, the maintenance of the SLIMS and the SMART patrol system and ultimately the implementation of conservation and rehabilitation measures. As it stands currently, there is a risk of a lack of financial resources to support these ongoing activities after the project end. So far, the government is committed to the project objective and the conservation of snow leopard. It is expected that the

government will continue to support the project achievements with the necessary financial resources from the national budget and possibly from other funding sources.

## 4.2. Recommendations

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

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

#### ***Issue to Address***

153. This project is part of the responses to national priorities. It seeks to remove barriers to improve biodiversity conservation in high-mountain ecosystems — including snow leopard conservation; to reduce pressure on mountain forests and pastures; and to ensure local communities become good stewards of the local biodiversity. Good progress has been made to strengthen the management of protected areas and overall to develop capacities to conserve and manage high-altitude mountain ecosystems. The project has been developing capacities in many areas and more of these activities will take place between now and the end of the project. Some project achievements should be sustained over the long-term such as the change of status of the Sangvor section; the development of the NAPCSL once approved by the government; or the use of wildlife monitoring equipment. They are becoming part of the official instruments to manage, monitor and surveil the natural capital in Tajikistan. 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 of relevant institutions are less obvious. Will these activities be enough to produce lasting positive changes in biodiversity conservation and in illegal wildlife trade? It is recommended to conduct capacity assessments of institutions and staff to identify potential capacity gaps and allocate sufficient project resources were needed to address these gaps during the remaining implementation period of the project.

### **Recommendation 2: It is recommended to increase the communications among stakeholders to disseminate more evenly the knowledge accumulated by the project.**

#### ***Issue to Address***

154. Stakeholders are well engaged in implementing activities. The participative and collaborative approach used by the project implementation team is conducive for this good engagement. However, not enough communication is being done by the project to keep all project partners/stakeholders up to date about the overall progress of the project and the PSC is not the best mechanism for communicating and exchanging technical progress made by the project. It is recommended to increase communications among stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, to improve the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned and disseminate more evenly the knowledge accumulated by the project. Organizing project partners meetings once or twice a year (annual technical reviews ?) to exchange experiences, lessons learned, and best practices on pasture management, forest management, protected area management, Snow Leopard conservation and sustainable livelihoods could be good events to increase this communication.

### **Recommendation 3: It is recommended to review/expand the micro-grant programme with a greater focus on alternative sources of income.**

#### ***Issue to Address***

155. Currently, micro-grants are funding activities seeking to improve the management of pastures with the construction of corrals and the rehabilitation of degraded pastures and forests; and to introduce alternative domestic energy (gas balloons) in order to decrease the use of biomass for domestic energy consumption. These actions contribute to the objective of the project but have a limited impact on the livelihood of local communities living in snow leopard ecosystems. It is recommended to expand this micro-grant programme with a greater focus on alternative sources of income (honey, medicinal herbs, ....), particularly with involvement of women, and including collaboration/coordination with the SGP - *Big Cat Conservation* programme and possibly other similar initiatives.

**Recommendation 4: It is recommended to explore the possibility to open an office in Khorog with one Project Officer based in Khorog.*****Issue to Address***

156. Khorog is the capital of the GBAO. It is the main center of the Pamir area, which is the main snow leopard ecosystem in Tajikistan. The project has already supported many activities in the area but mostly from Dushanbe. It is recommended to explore the possibility to co-finance with CEP a project office in Khorog staffed with one Officer. It would provide a local presence of the project, would increase its adaptability to respond to evolving local needs and lead to more project activities in the area and subsequently more results over time.

**Recommendation 5: It is recommended to review/assess the TV programmes supported by the project and expand the broadcast during the remaining period of the project.*****Issue to Address***

157. TV programmes aired with the support of the project have been excellent to raise awareness of local communities. These programmes seem to have “strike a chord”, particularly with local communities in high-mountain ecosystems in Tajikistan. Traditionally, the snow leopard is a natural symbol and pride of Tajikistan and these TV programmes have been a reminder of the importance of snow leopard within these ecosystems but also in the local culture of these communities. It is recommended to review these TV programmes and assess the possibility to support more of these programmes during the remaining implementation period of the project.

**Recommendation 6: It is recommended to undertake a socio-economic valuation study of high-mountain ecosystems.*****Issue to Address***

158. Knowing the socio-economic value of high-mountain ecosystems would provide critical information on gauging the importance of these ecosystems in the economy of Tajikistan. It would demonstrate the socio-economic value of these ecosystems to the government and provide a basis to explore the potential for investing in the protection and conservation of these ecosystems, including increasing the relevant government budget allocations. It is recommended to conduct a socio-economic valuation of high-mountain ecosystems in Tajikistan.

**Recommendation 7: It is recommended to provide uniforms to all Rangers in organizations collaborating with the project.*****Issue to Address***

159. The project has provided a limited amount of uniforms to some Rangers where the project intervenes such as staff at the forestry department of Shahriston. However, not all Rangers in these organizations got a uniform. Considering the budget availability, it is recommended to provide uniforms to all Rangers in organizations collaborating with the project.

**Recommendation 8: It is recommended to develop an exit strategy for the project.*****Issue to Address***

160. One of the barriers identified at the outset of the project is the limited government resources allocated to the management and conservation of the protected area system in Tajikistan. Since its inception, the project entered into an agreement with the forestry department to finance salaries of some Rangers on a 50/50 basis. It also procured equipment for Rangers to facilitate their fieldwork and better monitor and surveil fauna and flora within their protected areas. This approach has allowed project activities to be carried out with the required resources. However, once the project will end, financial resources will be needed to keep the Rangers employed, to maintain this equipment from time to time and at times to replace it. There will also be the need for the government to support some of these new activities such as the Snow Leopard Monitoring and Reporting system, the maintenance of the SLIMS and the SMART patrol system and ultimately the implementation of conservation and rehabilitation measures. The government is committed to the project

objective. Monitoring the snow leopard population is the main objective of the NAPCSL. It is expected that the government will continue to support project achievements with the necessary financial resources from the national budget and possibly from other funding sources. However, to facilitate the transition at the end of the project, it is recommended to prepare a project exit strategy, identifying what, when, where and how much some activities need to be continued.

**Recommendation 9: 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 August 2021.**

***Issue to Address***

161. As of end of October 2019, total expenditures amount to about USD 1.8M representing about 43% of the GEF grant versus an elapsed time of 65% (39 months out of 60). It has a remaining budget from the GEF grant of USD 2,389,943 (57%) for the remaining period of implementation. When considering the timeline left for implementing the project (21 months), it is doubtful that the entire budget will be expended by August 2021. From an average monthly disbursement of USD 45,934 so far, the project would need to multiply its disbursement rate by 2.5 times to reach an average monthly disbursement to USD 113,807 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 project disbursements in the coming year and if needed recommend a no-cost time extension of the project to consolidate its achievements.

**Recommendation 10: It is recommended to monitor project management expenditures in order to keep them aligned with the allocated budget of 4.8% of the total GEF grant.**

***Issue to Address***

162. Over 62% of the project management budget has already been spent, which represents a ratio of just under 7% of total expenditures to October 2019. This current ratio is almost one and a half time the planned ratio of 4.8% allocated to project management at the formulation stage. It is mostly due to the fact that the project is under-spending on project activities, yet project management costs are more of a fixed cost. It is recommended to monitor project management expenses during the remaining implementation period to bring it in line with the budgeted project management ratio of 4.8% of the total GEF grant.

**Recommendation 11: It is recommended to review co-financing commitments and request yearly estimates from Partners of the project.**

***Issue to Address***

163. Co-financing commitments at the outset of the project totaled USD 19,610,000, which represented about 82% 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 to the project 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 requests yearly co-financing estimates.

**Recommendation 12: It is recommended to increase coordination between snow leopard projects in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan to exchange best practices and lessons learned.**

***Issue to Address***

164. This project in Tajikistan is part of three similar projects; the other two being implemented in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. A fourth project in Kazakhstan includes a component on snow leopard conservation. Considering the similarities of these projects, it is recommended to increase the coordination among these projects to exchange experiences, lessons learned and best practices, including experiences in implementing their respective micro-grant programmes.

### **4.3. Lessons Learnt**

165. 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 TV programme based on the use of a natural symbol and pride of a country such as snow leopard for Tajikistan, can be a very powerful tool to raise awareness of communities on the importance of protecting and conserving this natural symbol.
- Organizing a festival on the need to protect and conserve snow leopard in the traditional landscape of this natural symbol for the Tajik people is a very effective way to raise awareness and disseminate knowledge.
- 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.
- 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.
- Implementation through government entities as custodians of project achievements is conducive to good long-term sustainability.
- Engaging women in protecting and conserving biodiversity is an effective approach to empower women. It provides women leadership than other women and girls can look up to, and inspires women and girls to be active as change agents in their communities.
- A micro-grant programme needs to include a focus on alternative biodiversity-friendly sources of income aiming at increasing the livelihood of local communities to be effective.
- Sustainability of this type of projects, is much correlated with capacities being developed during the lifetime of these projects. The more capacities are developed the more sustainable project achievements will be.
- An implementation approach through government entities, which become custodians of project achievements is conducive to good long-term sustainability.

## Annex 1: Map of Snow Leopard Landscapes



## Annex 2: 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 and project inception report. It is a succinct summary of what is expected from this project.

**Project Objective:** Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods.

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
<b>Component 1 – Conservation and sustainable management of key biodiversity areas.</b>	<b>Output 1.1:</b> Secure the conservation status and boundaries of protected areas	<b>GEF: \$1,890,657</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Prepare an application for the change in conservation status of the Sangvor Special Nature Reserve (in terms of Article 16 of the Law on Special Protected Nature Areas);</li> <li>(ii) Survey the boundaries and prepare survey diagrams for the boundaries of the area to be included into Tajik NP (Sangvor section).</li> <li>(iii) Relocate all surveyed boundary markers (typically in the form of concrete beacons or stone cairns) and - as required - replace or repair any missing markers in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</li> <li>(iv) Prepare the requisite documentation for the assignment of Sangvor as part of Tajik NP;</li> <li>(v) Update the state land cadaster and the land use register (in terms of Article 3 of the Land Code) for Sangvor;</li> <li>(vi) In consultation with affected stakeholders, prepare a zonation plan for Sangvor;</li> <li>(vii) In consultation with affected stakeholders, update the existing Park Management Plan, and associated annual operational plans and budgets, for Tajik NP to reflect the incorporation of Sangvor;</li> <li>(viii) Wherever practicable, establish and maintain some form of boundary delineation - such as stone cairns, concrete markers, fencing, etc. - in order to clearly demarcate the borders of the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</li> <li>(ix) Install boom gates and checkpoints (temporary or permanent hut, supplied with basic furnishing and bulk services) at key control entry points to the Lakhsh (at least 2 checkpoints) and Sangvor sections (at least 2 checkpoints), of Tajik NP as required; and</li> <li>(x) Design, produce and install signage at all entry points and along the reserve boundaries of the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP</li> </ul>
	<b>Output 1.2:</b> Develop the capacity to implement a smart patrolling system in protected areas		<p><i>Patrol staff</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Contract additional rangers to supplement the current patrol complement in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</li> </ul> <p><i>Patrol staff equipment, security and supplies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ii) Procure high quality summer and winter staff uniforms (replaced annually) and staff safety and camping equipment (including tents, sleeping bags, backpacks, water bottles, ice picks, first aid kit, utensils, weapons, binoculars, cameras and torches) for all protected areas staff in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</li> <li>(iii) Supplement the daily patrol rations for patrol staff in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP; and</li> <li>(iv) Procure basic monthly insurance cover (injury and life) for patrol staff in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP.</li> </ul> <p><i>Patrol staff training</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(iv) Design and develop a comprehensive smart patrol training program (including patrol planning, mapping, GPS technology, data collection, animal and plant identification, search and arrest, use of firearms, communications,</li> </ul>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
			<p>first aid, physical strength) - comprising basic training, advanced training and refresher training - for all patrol and selected management staff of the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</p> <p>(v) Implement the basic (~2 weeks) and advanced (2-4 days) smart patrol training for all patrol staff in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</p> <p>(vi) Maintain regular (annual) short (1-2 days) refresher smart training courses for all patrol staff in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP; and</p> <p>(vii) Implement a 'train-the-trainer' project for nominated staff in the Forestry Agency (and/or the CEP) who will be responsible for initiating the smart patrol training in other sections of Tajik NP and in other SPNAs.</p> <p><i>Smart patrol information technology</i></p> <p>(viii) Update the baseline GIS database for the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP (e.g. ortho- corrected aerial photography, park boundaries, data capture grid system, etc.);</p> <p>(ix) Design a patrol database that will collate and present the spatial and attribute data (including information on patrol effort, patrol coverage and intensity, poaching distribution and intensity, incident reports, key species distribution, etc.) to be collected by patrol staff in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</p> <p>(x) Procure and install the hardware, software and networks required to maintain the patrol database in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</p> <p>(xi) Procure GPS-enabled data collection devices (e.g. cybertracker, mobile tablets, smartphones, etc.) for patrol staff in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP; and</p> <p>(xii) Develop an application for the GPS-enabled data collection devices to capture the spatial and attribute data collected by patrolling rangers in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP.</p> <p><i>Smart patrol performance assessment</i></p> <p>(xiii) Maintain regular patrol coverage and intensity of patrol teams across the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</p> <p>(xiv) Facilitate regular meetings and/or workshops between managers, patrol staff, communities and other stakeholders in and around the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP to discuss and analyse smart patrol data outputs, and collaboratively identify ways to address ongoing threats; and</p> <p>(xv) Document the lessons learnt from, and good practices in, the development and implementation of smart patrols in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP to guide the future expansion of smart patrols to other SPNAs.</p>
	<p><b>Output 1.3:</b> Improve the equipment and infrastructure to support the implementation of a smart patrol system in protected areas.</p>		<p>(i) Upgrade the communications network for the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP (including procuring or replacing cell phones, satellite phones, satellite transmitter dishes, base- radio stations, radio antennae, VHF/FM hand-held radios and/or VHF/FM vehicle radio units), as and where needed;</p> <p>(ii) Procure essential transport for patrol and management staff in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP, including two 4x4 SUVs, eight motorcycles, twenty horses and 10 donkeys;</p> <p>(iii) Construct (including the installation of bulk services such as power supply, water supply and waste disposal) and equip (including the procurement of furnishing, installations and supply of office equipment) a smart patrol planning and data centre - comprising at least an open plan office, a garage for vehicles, a stable for horses/donkeys and bathroom facilities - to service the smart patrol system in the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP; and</p> <p>(iv) Construct (including the installation of bulk services such as power supply, water supply and waste disposal) and equip (including the procurement of basic furnishing and installations) patrol outposts - comprising at least an open plan sleeping area, basic kitchen and bathroom - in the Lakhsh section (2 outposts) and Sangvor</p>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
	<p><b>Output 1.4:</b> Enhance community involvement in, and beneficiation from, protected areas.</p>		<p>section (2 outposts).</p> <p>(i) Develop an education and outreach programme for the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</p> <p>(ii) Contract, train and equip (i.e. uniforms and vehicles) 2-3 community liaison officers for the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP to implement the education and outreach programme, and to facilitate social development and economic development activities, in the surrounding communities of Sangvor and Lakhsh;</p> <p>(iii) Design and publish information and educational materials and media (posters, brochures, booklets, DVDs, etc.) for use in the Jamoat resource centres and schools in and around the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</p> <p>(iv) Develop and present informational and awareness-raising 'road shows' (i.e. using pre- packaged informational and educational materials) in the targeted villages around the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP;</p> <p>(v) Support the negotiation, drafting, adoption and maintenance of a basic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP and each adjacent village government;</p> <p>(vi) For each formalized village-based MOU, assist the village government in the planning, fund- raising and implementation of sustainable livelihood development opportunities (e.g. eco- tourism enterprises, organic agriculture, etc.) that are explicitly identified in these MOUs;</p> <p>(vii) Within the context of each MOU, procure and implement skills training programmes – including inter alia monitoring and enforcement, business development, construction, plumbing, electrical work, equipment maintenance, catering, etc. - for pre-selected community members;</p> <p>(viii) Wherever practicable, facilitate the preferential appointment or procurement of contract staff, services and supplies (e.g. park staff, labor and sub-contractors for construction works, transport, accommodation, suppliers of rations for patrol staff, etc.) from the corps of pre- trained community members for the implementation of outputs 1.1 – 1.4;</p> <p>(ix) Facilitate the involvement of affected local communities in, and beneficiation from, hunting concessions in Tajik NP; and</p> <p>(x) For the Lakhsh and Sangvor sections of Tajik NP, establish a joint co-management structure that can inter alia: facilitate broader community and local government participation in the reserve management decision-making; agree on park-wide regulations required to control community access to the parks natural resources; collectively enforce tenure and natural resource use agreements between the community and park management; and provide an accessible and transparent dispute-resolution mechanism.</p>
<p><b>Component 2 –</b> Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in wider landscape outside protected areas.</p>	<p><b>Output 2.1:</b> Reduce impacts on, and improve the management of, livestock pastures</p>	<p>GEF: \$1,355,700</p>	<p><i>Selection and profiling of critical high-altitude pasture areas</i></p> <p>(i) Identify and prioritize the high-altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas that overlap with the critical habitats and movement corridors for snow leopard and prey;</p> <p>(ii) Use high resolution aerial photography, existing spatial and non-spatial databases and ground- truthing (e.g. disc pasture meter) to collate the environmental (e.g. soil types, above-ground plant biomass, grass species composition and quality, disturbance levels) and land tenure (e.g. use rights, sub- lease agreement, land use standards, territorial zoning) baseline data for a sub-set of the high priority high altitude pastures;</p> <p>(iii) Use existing livestock information, census data and focused interviews with livestock farmers, PUUs and Jamoat/ hukumat officials to collate the baseline data on the distribution and extent of livestock farming (e.g. livestock numbers, livestock distribution, proprietary rights to livestock, distribution of the breeders' camps, etc.) in this sub-set of high priority pastures;</p>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
	<p><b>Output 2.2:</b> Reduce impacts on, and</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(iv) Use the baseline data from (ii) and (iii) above to develop thematic maps (e.g. vulnerability and risks, estimates of standing biomass, forage quality, extent of degradation, distribution of winter and summer grazing, pasture infrastructure, etc.) in support of pasture planning and management for the sub-set of high priority pastures.</li> </ul> <p><i>Pasture management planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(v) Review and update the optimal livestock stocking rates and grazing regimes, and develop thematic livestock use maps (e.g. zonation of livestock carrying capacities, distribution of seasonal and year-round grazing areas, livestock migration routes, areas requiring supplementary feeding, restoration/rehabilitation priority areas, etc.) in support of pasture planning and management for the sub-set of high priority pastures;</li> <li>(vi) Develop district-based norms and standards for high priority pasture areas (including regulations on pasture allocation, norms on carrying capacity and rehabilitation, and monitoring standards for livestock and pasture yields);</li> <li>(vii) Assist the affected local PUUs to prepare (or update existing) pasture management plans, with a specific focus on the high altitude pastures. These pasture management plans may include inter alia: map of forage areas; map of sensitive areas; livestock and forage guidelines; grazing management system (continuous, rotational, seasonal); measures for rehabilitation; infrastructure (feed storage, water supply, corrals, etc.) management; predator management measures; monitoring system; and cooperative governance arrangements;</li> <li>(viii) Facilitate the alignment of the pasture management plans with the relevant territorial planning schemes of the Jamoat and any issued (pasture) 'certificates of use' and (pasture) 'lease agreements' for high altitude pastures; and</li> </ul> <p><i>Grant funding for, and technical support to, the implementation of the pasture management plans</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ix) Provide technical and grant funding support to PUUs and individual pastoralists in the implementation of more sustainable pasture management practices in the high altitude pastures. Technical and grant funding support may include inter alia; constructing basic infrastructure for livestock and herders (e.g. predator-proof enclosures, herder's cabins, water and feed storage facilities); procuring predator-proof technologies (e.g. guard dogs, predator proof collars); relocating livestock from heavily overgrazed pastures to under-utilized pastures; procuring adequate insurance cover; provision of veterinary support services; and development of alternative livelihoods to compensate for loss of income due to reduction in livestock numbers or loss of access to pastures.</li> </ul> <p><i>Restoration and rehabilitation of heavily degraded grasslands</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(x) In collaboration with the relevant PUU and Jamoat, identify and prioritize the selection of 4-8 degraded high altitude grassland sites (collectively representing a total area of ~10,000ha) for active rehabilitation/restoration;</li> <li>(xi) Review the national and regional best practices in grassland rehabilitation/restoration;</li> <li>(xii) Develop a basic rehabilitation/restoration plan for each site. The restoration/rehabilitation plan will identify the optimal management approach, restoration/rehabilitation methodologies (e.g. grazing management, seeding, soil treatment, etc.) and maintenance measures to be implemented;</li> <li>(xiii) Erect and maintain livestock fencing (and gates), relocate livestock farming infrastructure (e.g. water points, sheds) and manage livestock numbers in order to control and manage the impact of grazing on the restoration/rehabilitation efforts; and</li> <li>(xiv) Support the implementation and monitoring of the pasture rehabilitation/restoration plan in each site.</li> </ul> <p><i>Identifying priority high altitude forests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Identify and prioritize the high altitude forests in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas that overlap with the</li> </ul>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
	improve the management of, forests		<p>critical habitats and movement corridors for snow leopard and prey;  <i>Implement participatory forest management</i></p> <p>(ii) Support the ongoing implementation of participatory forest management (PFM) initiatives in these priority high altitude forests;</p> <p>(iii) Support the participative development, adoption and enforcement of management guidelines to mitigate the impacts of wood harvesting on the priority high altitude forests;</p> <p>(iv) Improve the scientific basis for the determination of the sanitary cutting requirements for the priority high altitude forests;</p> <p>(v) Test, in consultation with local users, a range of measures (e.g. limits on offtake, harvesting techniques, seasonal closed seasons, improved monitoring and enforcement, etc.) to ensure the sustainability, and reduce the environmental impacts, of the harvesting of wood from priority high altitude forests;</p> <p><i>Forest restoration and rehabilitation</i></p> <p>(vi) In collaboration with the relevant PFM committees and the responsible leskhoz, identify and prioritize the selection of 6-10 degraded high altitude forests (collectively representing a total area of ~6,000ha) for active rehabilitation/restoration;</p> <p>(vii) Review the national and regional best practices in forest restoration and rehabilitation.</p> <p>(viii) On the basis of this review, develop a basic rehabilitation/restoration plan for each identified forest. The restoration/rehabilitation plan will strive to realize the overall management objective for each forest and will identify the optimal species mix, soil treatments (e.g. tillage, irrigation), restoration/rehabilitation methodologies (e.g. seeding, enrichment planting, terracing, etc.) and maintenance measures to be implemented;</p> <p>(ix) Establish and maintain a system of firebreaks around each identified forest to reduce the impact of wildfire on the restoration/rehabilitation efforts;</p> <p>(x) Establish small local nurseries for forest species used in restoration/rehabilitation;</p> <p>(xi) Support the implementation and monitoring of the forest restoration/rehabilitation plan in each identified forest;</p> <p><i>Alternative fuel and energy technologies</i></p> <p>(xii) Install a series of energy and fuel technologies and systems - including wind turbine, solar panels, generator, small hydro-electric power, coal, woodlots, etc. - in a selected jamoat resource centre in the demonstration site;</p> <p>(xiii) Prepare informational materials and displays on the costs, environmental benefits and technical requirements for the pre-installed alternative fuel and energy technologies;</p> <p>(xiv) Host energy and fuel technology demonstration days for community groups, schools, local government, etc.;</p> <p>(xv) Provide small grants to assist rural communities and local governments to adopt alternative fuel and energy technologies.</p>
	<b>Output 2.3:</b> Strengthen wildlife monitoring and enforcement capacities		<p>(i) Establish and equip a central training facility, under the ambit of the NBBC, that will provide wildlife monitoring and enforcement training for affected staff from all relevant public institutions (including staff from CEP, NBBC, Academy of Sciences, Forestry Agency, hukumats, Jamoats, etc.);</p> <p>(ii) Design, develop materials and implement an ongoing in-service wildlife monitoring and enforcement training and skills development programme for affected staff from all relevant public institutions. The programme may include short (1-2 day) training and skills development courses in inter alia: key species identification and biology; basic ecology of high altitude habitats; the legal and regulatory framework for wildlife and habitat protection; international wildlife and habitat conservation agreements; illegal trade in snow leopard and prey; wildlife monitoring and information management; sustainable forest and pasture management; cooperative</p>

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(iii) governance in wildlife management; human-wildlife conflicts; etc.;</li> <li>(iv) Facilitate the implementation of the Law on Hunting (2014), notably in respect of the equitable distribution of income from hunting - in conformance with the explicit requirements of the Law - to local communities and to protected areas.</li> <li>(v) Pilot the staffing, training, equipping and deployment of a local corps of community rangers to patrol and monitor an area known for illegal activities linked to hunting and poaching of snow leopard and prey (these community rangers will however only monitor and report back on illegal activities, not enforce any regulations); and</li> <li>(v) Support the procurement of key equipment (e.g. vehicles, uniforms, rations, protective clothing, computer equipment, GPS, communications equipment) for local field-based environmental and forestry enforcement staff of the Forestry Agency and CEP.</li> </ul>
<b>Component 3 -</b> Support to international cooperation.	<b>Output 3.1:</b> Enhance the state of knowledge on snow leopard and prey populations	<b>GEF: \$735,900</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Develop a national snow leopard monitoring and reporting system that will enable the standardized collection, collation, modelling and dissemination of information on inter alia: estimations of snow leopard and prey populations, determinations of snow leopard home ranges, identification of snow leopard migration corridors, and assessments of the nature and scale of threats to snow leopard, prey and habitats.</li> <li>(ii) Procure the requisite computer equipment (software, hardware and networking) and design an electronic snow leopard information management system (including developing data standards and procedures and defining data flows) to host the spatial and non-spatial monitoring and reporting data for snow leopard and prey;</li> <li>(iii) Source and validate all existing electronic (GIS data, spreadsheets, images, reports, etc.) and hard copy (maps, reports, tables, etc.) information (from NGOs, scientific and research institutes, patrol reports, etc.) on snow leopard, prey and habitats and integrate it into the snow leopard information management system;</li> <li>(iv) Host a series of specialist training sessions for researchers, scientists, academics, volunteers, students, NGO staff, government field staff, etc. on inter alia: the snow leopard monitoring and reporting system, the snow leopard information management system, monitoring tools and techniques, procedures and standards for collecting and submitting information, statistical tools for extrapolation, etc.;</li> <li>(v) Ensure the ongoing collection, transformation and integration of key data and information (from multiple sources) in the snow leopard information management system;</li> <li>(vi) Increase the coverage of camera traps (ensuring adequate sample size and capture probability), and linked database of individual cat photo identifications, across the snow leopard range;</li> <li>(vii) Increase the coverage of aerial surveys and aerial photography (using lightweight unmanned aerial vehicles) of medium-sized mountain ungulates across the snow leopard range.</li> </ul> <p>Facilitate the opportunistic (e.g. injured or live-trapped cats) fitting of miniaturized radio collars and GPS satellite technology (which allows multiple fixes to be obtained daily and downloaded remotely) to improve knowledge of movement patterns, habitat use, home range size and dispersal; and</p> <p>Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of monitoring snow leopard populations using fecal DNA analysis in a pilot study area.</p>
	<b>Output 3.2:</b> Improve the coordination of, and cooperation in, snow leopard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Conduct an ecosystem services and economic valuation of snow leopards and their mountain ecosystems, including the direct and indirect valuation of provisioning services (food, fibre, and water), regulatory services (climate regulation, water regulation, soil preservation), cultural services (cultural diversity, spiritual and religious values), and supporting services (soil production, soil retention);</li> </ul>	

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
	conservation and monitoring		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ii) Based on the improved state of knowledge of snow leopard, prey and their habitats, update the draft National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation in Tajikistan (2012) for formal adoption by the Government of Tajikistan;</li> <li>(iii) Assess the feasibility of a range of different mechanisms for financing the implementation of the National Action Plan, and identify the key actions required to mobilize the critical funding requirements identified in the National Action Plan;</li> <li>(iv) Establish and maintain a cooperative governance structure (e.g. a National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee, or similar) - under the stewardship of the NBBC - to coordinate the efforts of different partner institutions, organizations and individuals in the implementation of the National Action Plan; <b>Support the establishment of a National Environment Security Task Force (NEST), as a means of addressing and combating wildlife crime in Tajikistan through a more coordinated, collaborative and strategic response;</b></li> <li>(v) Develop a framework for transboundary collaboration with Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, China, and Kyrgyzstan in combatting poaching and illegal trade and reducing the illicit demand for illegal wildlife products;</li> <li>(vi) Build capacity and engage border and customs officials to improve the detection of illegal trade in snow leopard parts;</li> <li>(vii) Organize visits between adjacent snow leopard range countries to share lessons learned, experiences in PA management, and community-based wildlife management; and</li> <li>(viii) Facilitate the active participation of scientists, researchers and academics in regional/international snow leopard monitoring and report-back meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>Project Management</b>		<b>GEF: \$199,113</b>	
<b>Total Financing</b>		<b>GEF: \$4,181,370 + Co-financing: \$19,610,000 = Total: \$23,791,370</b>	

Source: Project Document

Note: **Activities highlighted in yellow** are activities revised during the inception phase and documented in the inception report.

## **Annex 3: MTR Terms of Reference**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

<b>Organization:</b>	<b>United Nations Development Programme</b>
<b>Programme/Project name:</b>	<b>UNDP-GEF project “Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alay and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods”</b>
<b>Post Title:</b>	<b>International Consultant on Project Midterm Review</b>
<b>Period of assignment/services:</b>	<b>estimated 25 working days over the period of: November 2019-January 2020</b>
<b>Duty station:</b>	<b>Home-based, with one mission to Tajikistan (approximately 10 working days)</b>
<b>Type of appointment:</b>	<b>Individual Contract (International Consultancy)</b>

### **I. BACKGROUND**

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

Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alay and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods.

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

This is the Terms of Reference for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the full-sized project titled “Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alay and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods” (PIMS 5437) implemented through the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center under the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, which is to be undertaken in 2019. The project started on the 03 August 2016 and is in its third year of implementation. In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated before the submission of the second Project Implementation Report (PIR). The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects (see Annex).

The project was designed to: support the implementation of the priority actions contained in the National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Priorities for Tajikistan. It seeks to: (i) prevent the further fragmentation of snow leopard and prey landscapes in Tajikistan; (ii) maintain and/or restore the quality of key snow leopard and prey habitats within these landscapes; (iii) improve the conservation status of, and sustainability of pasture and forest use in, these key snow leopard and prey habitats; and (iv) reduce the direct threats to the survival of snow leopards and prey populations living in these key habitats.

The project strategy is focused around four strategic areas of intervention as follows:

Conservation areas – improving the conservation tenure and conservation security of protected areas and community-based conservancies by building the institutional and individual capacities to implement a smart patrol system;

Livestock pasture areas – improving sustainable management of pasture lands across the snow leopard range by incentivising changes to unsustainable practices and reducing the extent and intensity of conflicts between pastoralists and snow leopard and their prey by enhancing the survival rate of livestock;

Forest areas – improving the ecological integrity of forests in the snow leopard range by: (i) rehabilitating degraded forests; and (ii) reducing the extent and intensity of harvesting of wood from these forests by encouraging the adoption of other fuel sources; and

Knowledge – expanding the reach of research, monitoring and planning efforts about snow leopard, snow leopard prey and their habitats by building institutional capacities, resources and partnerships.

The project is structured into three components, with each component comprising a complementary suite of two to four outputs which collectively contribute to realizing the targeted outcome for the component.

The first component supports the development and implementation of a smart patrol system in two sections of the Tajik NP, a World Heritage Site. Work under this component is focused around four key areas of project support: (i) Secure the conservation status and boundaries of protected areas (Output 1.1); (ii) Develop the capacity to implement a smart patrolling system in protected areas (Output 1.2); (iii) Improve the equipment and infrastructure to support the implementation of a smart patrolling system in protected areas (Output 1.3); and (iv) Enhance community involvement in, and beneficiation from, protected areas (Output 1.4).

The second component assists in improving the planning and management of the high altitude livestock pastures and indigenous forests located along, or immediately adjacent to, the key snow leopard migration routes within the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas. Work under this component is focused around three key areas of project support: (i) Reduce impacts on, and improve the management of, livestock pastures (Output 2.1); (ii) Reduce impacts on, and improve the management of, forests (Output 2.2); and (iii) Strengthen wildlife monitoring and enforcement capacities (Output 2.3).

The third component strengthens the state of knowledge of, and collaboration in, the conservation of snow leopard and their ecosystems. Work under this component is focused around two key areas of project support: (i) Enhance the state of knowledge on snow leopard and prey populations (Output 3.1); and (ii) Improve the coordination of, and cooperation in, snow leopard conservation and monitoring (Output 3.2).

## **II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

The MTR team will consist of two independent consultants that will conduct the MTR - one International Consultant (team leader) and one National Consultant (team expert).

The MTR team will first conduct a document review of project documents (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, Project Document, ESSP, Project Inception Report, PIRs, Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools, Project Appraisal Committee meeting minutes, Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team, project operational guidelines, manuals and systems, etc.) provided by the Project Team and Commissioning Unit. Then they will participate in a 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 Dashtijum (Samsiddin Shokhin District), Sarikhosor (Baljuvan district), Sangvor, and Lyakhsh sections of the Tajik National Park, Iskanderkul (Aini district), Shakhristan District, Khorog city, Murgab district, Bartang valley.

The MTR team 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*

([http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance\\_Midterm%20Review%20\\_EN\\_2014.pdf](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf)) 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 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.

## 2. 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.

## 3. 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

## 4. 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/team 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/team 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/team should make no more than 15 recommendations total.

In the course of the assignment the International Consultant is expected to perform the duties as below:

- Desk review of documents, development of MTR Inception Report (3-day homework);
- Debriefing with UNDP CO, agreement on the methodology, scope and outline of the MTR report (2 days);
- Interviews with project implementing partner (Executing Entity), relevant Government, NGO and donor representatives (3 days);
- Field visit to the pilot project sites and interviews (6 days);
- Debriefing with UNDP (1 day);
- Development and submission of the first MTR report draft (maximum of 8 days);
- Finalization and submission of the final MTR report through incorporating suggestions received on the draft report (maximum 2 days);
- Supervision of the work of the national consultant (during entire evaluation period).

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

The MTR consultant/team shall prepare and submit:

- MTR Inception Report: MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of the Midterm Review no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission. To be sent to the Commissioning Unit and project management. Approximate due date: December 4th, 2019;
- Presentation: Initial Findings presented to project management and the Commissioning Unit at the end of the MTR mission. Approximate due date: December 13th, 2019;
- Draft Final Report: Full report with annexes within 3 weeks of the MTR mission. Approximate due date: January 6th, 2020;
- Final 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 no later than 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft. Approximate due date: January 20th, 2020

#	<i><b>Deliverable</b></i>	<i><b>Approx. Timeframe</b></i>
1.	MTR Inception Report: MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of the Midterm Review no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission. To be sent to the Commissioning Unit and project management.	4 December 2019
2.	Presentation: Initial Findings presented to project management and the Commissioning Unit at the end of the MTR mission.	13 December 2019
	Draft Final Report: Full report with annexes within 3 weeks of the MTR mission.	6 January 2020
3.	Final 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 no later than 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft.	20 January 2020

- *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.*

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

- 10% of payment upon approval of the MTR Inception Report
- 30% upon submission of the draft MTR Report
- 60% upon finalization of the MTR Report

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

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

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

#### **F. Duration of the Work**

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately 25 working days over a period of 10 weeks starting on November 20th, 2019, and shall not exceed five months from when the consultants are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

- *November 20th, 2019:* Selection of MTR Team
- *November 22nd, 2019:* Prep the MTR Team (handover of project documents)
- *November 25th to 29th, 2019, 3 days:* Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report
- *December 2nd to 4th, 2019, 2 days:* Finalization and Validation of MTR Inception Report- latest start of MTR mission
- *December 6th to 15th, 2019, 10 days:* MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits
- *December 13th, 2019:* Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings - earliest end of MTR mission
- *December 16th, 2019 to January 6th, 2020, 8 days:* Preparing draft report
- *January 20th, 2020, 2 days:* Incorporating audit trail on draft report/Finalization of MTR report
- *February 10th, 2020:* Preparation & Issue of Management Response
- *February 14th, 2020:* Concluding Stakeholder Workshop (not mandatory for MTR team)
- *February 14th, 2020:* Expected date of full MTR completion

The date start of contract is November 20th, 2019.

#### **G. Duty Station**

The assignment will be home-based with one mission to Tajikistan for maximum 13 overnights.

##### **Travel:**

- International travel will be required to 1 country (Tajikistan) during the MTR mission;
- The BSAFE online security awareness training course must be successfully completed prior to commencement of travel;
- Individual Consultants are responsible for ensuring they have vaccinations/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director.
- Consultants are required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under <https://dss.un.org/dssweb/>
- All related travel expenses will be covered and will be reimbursed as per UNDP rules and regulations upon submission of an F-10 claim form and supporting documents.

### **III. REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

#### **H. Qualifications of the Successful Applicants**

The selection of the consultant will be aimed at maximizing the overall “team” qualities in the following areas:

- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART targets and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to GEF’s Biodiversity (BD), Land Degradation (LD) and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Focal Areas;
- Experience working with the GEF or GEF-evaluations;
- Experience working in CEE and Central Asia;
- Work experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years;
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and GEF’s Biodiversity (BD), Land Degradation (LD) and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Focal Areas; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis;
- Excellent communication skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- A Master’s degree in Biodiversity Conservation, Natural Resource Management, Environmental Economics, or other closely related field.
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- Proficiency in English is a requirement; good command of Russian is an asset.

#### ***Consultant Independence:***

The consultants 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

#### **Annexes to the MTR ToR**

- ToR Annexes in Annex 3 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*
- *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*
- List of documents to be reviewed by the MTR Team
- Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report
- UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants
- MTR Required Ratings Table and Ratings Scales
- MTR Report Clearance Form
- Sample MTR Evaluative Matrix
- Progress Towards Results Matrix and MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Tables (in Word)

## **Annex 4: 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 limitations, 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

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

Signed in Ottawa on November 25, 2019



Signature. \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signed in Dushanbe on December 3, 2019



Signature. \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Consultant: ***Tahmina Akhmedova***

## Annex 5: Mid-Term Review Matrix

The evaluation matrix below served as a general guide for the mid-term 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 - How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF, UNDP and of Tajikistan to strengthen its capacity to sustainably manage, use and conserve natural resources in high altitude mountain ecosystems?</b>				
<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 Tajikistan's capacity to sustainably manage, use and conserve natural resources in high altitude mountain ecosystems?</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 sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources in high altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan?</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 sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources in high altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan</li> <li>▪ Degree of coherence between the project and national priorities, policies and strategies; particularly related to the sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources in high altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan</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> <li>▪ Were gender issues incorporated in the project design?</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>
<i>Is the Project internally</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 (Strategic Results Framework) and the project design (in terms of project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level of coherence between project expected results and internal project design logic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program and project documents</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
<i>coherent in its design?</i>	<p>components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources etc.)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are the assumptions made at the outset still valid?</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 design and project implementation approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key project stakeholders</li> </ul>	
<i>How is the Project relevant in light of other donors?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ With regards to Tajikistan, 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 Tajikistan</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>
Future directions for similar Projects	<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 components and objective 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/components? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conservation and sustainable management of key biodiversity areas</li> <li>○ Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in wider landscape outside protected areas</li> <li>○ Support to international cooperation</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Is the project strategy feasible within the timeframe of the project?</li> <li>▪ Does the project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation?</li> <li>▪ Does (or will) the project catalyze unintended beneficial development effects?</li> <li>▪ Are environmental and social safeguards appropriately addressed in the project implementation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New methodologies, skills and knowledge</li> <li>▪ Change in capacity for the sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources in high-altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan</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 sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources in high altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan: <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> <li>○ Mobilization of advisory services</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Gender disaggregated data in project documents</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
How is risk and risk mitigation being managed?	<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>
Future directions for similar Projects	<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>				
Is Project support channeled in an efficient way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?</li> <li>▪ Is the implementation in line with the timeline of the project?</li> <li>▪ Does the Project Strategic 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? Does it measure well the performance of the project?</li> <li>▪ How SMART are 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>▪ Are financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently?</li> <li>▪ Is the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happened as planned?</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 activities and outcomes of the project?</li> <li>▪ Are there an institutionalized or informal feedback or dissemination mechanisms to ensure that findings, lessons learned and recommendations pertaining to project formulation and implementation effectiveness were shared among project stakeholders, UNDP staff and</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> </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
	other relevant organizations for ongoing project adjustment and improvement?			
<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 project?</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 sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources in high altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Proportion of total expertise utilized taken from Tajikistan</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>
Future directions for similar Projects	<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 enhancing the conservation, and the sustainable use of natural resources in the biodiverse high-altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan?</b>				
<i>How is the Project effective in achieving its long-term objective?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Will the project achieve its objective that is “conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods”?</li> <li>■ Are there any qualitative and quantitative evidence on environmental stress reduction and environmental status change</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> <li>○ For implementation of related strategies and programmes through adequate institutional frameworks and their maintenance,</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Changes in use and implementation of sustainable alternatives</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> <li>■ Interviews with project beneficiaries and other stakeholders</li> </ul>

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Changes to critical threats to biodiversity in mountainous landscapes:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Unsustainable levels of grazing in the mountainous areas</li> <li>○ Competition for food with large and growing domestic livestock populations resulting in a reduction of wild prey numbers</li> <li>○ Increase conflicts between mountain communities and snow leopard</li> <li>○ Illegal logging and harvesting of fuelwood is threatening biodiversity in the region's forests</li> <li>○ Impacts of climate change with increase in air temperature in high altitude zones</li> <li>○ Underlying social, political and economic issues</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Changes to the quantity and strength of barriers such as change in:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Limited resources for, and capabilities in, the planning and management of SPNAs</li> <li>○ Unsustainable land use management practices outside the SPNAs</li> <li>○ Incomplete information and knowledge management systems for management decision-making and trans-boundary cooperation</li> </ul> </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>
Future directions for the Project	<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 Project design?</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 components?</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>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 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 development</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 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 sustainable management and conservation of natural resources in high altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan</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 or scaled up?</li> <li>▪ What was the project contribution to replication or scaling up of innovative practices or mechanisms to improve the sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources in high altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan?</li> <li>▪ Does the project has a catalytic role?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number/quality of replicated initiatives</li> <li>▪ Number/quality of replicated innovative initiatives</li> <li>▪ Volume of additional investment leveraged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Other donor programming documents</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>Reviewed Component</b>	<b>Sub-Question</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Data Collection Method</b>
<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>
Future directions for the Project	<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 sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources in high-altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan?</li> <li>▪ Are national decision-making institutions (Parliament, Government etc.) ready to improve their measures to improve the sustainable management, use and conservation of natural resources in high-altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan?</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 6: List of Documents Reviewed**

FAO, Government of Tajikistan, April 2016, *Country Programming Framework for Tajikistan 2016-2017*

GEF, April 12, 2016, *CEO Letter to GEF Council*

GEF, April 26, 2011, *Proposal for Enhancing the Visibility of the GEF*

GEF, *Brand Guidelines and Graphic Standards*

GEF, *GEF-6 Full Sized Project for Endorsement*

GEF, *GEF-6 Programming Directions*

GEF, *GEF Secretariat Review for Full/Medium Sized Projects (2)*

GEF, Government of Tajikistan, UNDP, 2017, *Inception Report*

GEF, Government of Tajikistan, UNDP, *Gender Analysis and Action Plan (Project)*

GEF, *Project Identification Form (PIF)*

GEF, SGP, UNDP, *Snow Leopard – A Silent Roar OP6 Innovation Programmes on Big Cats Conservation*

GEF, SGP, UNDP, *OP6 Innovation Programmes for the Strategic Initiative on Community Landscape/Seascape Conservation - Big Cats Conservation Programme*

GEF, UNDP, *Concept Note on OP6 Innovation Programmes for the Strategic Initiative on Community Landscape/Seascape Conservation – Big Cats Conservation Programme, UNDP-GEF SGP Tajikistan 2019*

GEF, UNDP, *Project-level Monitoring – Guidance for Conducting MTRs of UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Projects*

GEF, UNDP, *Silent Roar – UNDP and GEF in the Snow Leopard Landscape*

GEF Evaluation Office, January 2012, *The GEF M&E Policy*

Government of Kyrgyzstan, GEF, UNDP, *Project Document: Transboundary Cooperation for Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Conservation*

Government of Tajikistan, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Small Grants Programme Strategy*

Government of Tajikistan, GEF, UNDP, *Numerous communication products produced by the project*

Government of Tajikistan, GEF, UNDP, *Project Communication Strategy*

Government of Tajikistan, *National Plan – Action to Conserve the Snow Leopard and its Ecosystems in Tajikistan for 2018-2022 (draft)*

Government of Tajikistan, *Resolution – About Measures to Improve Hunting in the Territory of the Republic of Tajikistan – Dated July 16, 1997, No. 324*

Government of Tajikistan, *Resolution – On approval of fees for the implementation of legally significant actions and fees for issuing permits for the use of natural and other available resources, Dated November 2, 2007, No. 546*

Government of Tajikistan, *Resolution - On the Procedure and Amounts for Compensation for Damage Caused to the Forest Fund and Other Plant and Animal Objects by Individuals and Legal Entities, Dated December 31, 2014, No. 790*

Government of Tajikistan, UNDP, *Project Document*

Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, *Disappearing Treasures – Protection of Endangered Mountain Animals*

Governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, April 12, 2019, *Resolution - of the Sughd regional workshop «Transboundary Aspects of Conservation of Snow Leopard Ecosystems» Sughd Region*

Lucy Emerton, June 2019, *International Experiences in Ecosystem Valuation: Review of Best Practices and Lessons Learned for Uzbekistan*

NBBC, NBBC Progress Reports to CEP: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

NBBC, SGP Agreements: 2017 - Association of Public Organization Saodat; Dehkan Farm Marvori; Dehkan Farm Dhodilang; 2018 – Dehkan Farm Gairatali; Dehkan Farm Hojiyon; Dehkan Farm Rajabi; Public Organization Kuhistoni Dashtijum; 2019 – Association of Dehkan Farm Mirzo Abdullo; Dehkan Farm Siyovush; Public Organization Jamoat Resource Center Ivan Tojik

NBBC, Standard Agreement with Tabiat Pomir

NBBC, Standard Agreement with Women in Pamir

NBBC, UNDP, AWP 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 (draft)

Republic of Tajikistan, 2003, *National Strategy and Action Plan on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity*

Republic of Tajikistan, 2016, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Up to 2020*

Republic of Tajikistan, *National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period to 2015*

STAP, *Scientific and Technical Screening of the PIF*

UN, Government of Tajikistan, UNDP, 2012, *National Review – Towards a “Green” Economy in Tajikistan*

UN, UNDP, June 27, 2015, *Country Programme Document for Tajikistan (2016-2020)*

UN Environment, CBC, UN, *6th National Report for the Convention on Biological Diversity*

UNDP, *CDR Atlas financial reports: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019*

UNDP, December 3, 1993, *Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Tajikistan and UNDP*

UNDP, July 1, 2011, *National Implementation by the Government of UNDP Supported Projects: Guidelines and Procedures*

UNIQUE Forestry and Land Use GmgH, October 27, 2014, *Institutional Analysis on Pasture Management in Tajikistan (Final Report)*

\_\_\_\_\_, 2013, *National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection Priorities (NSLEP) Tajikistan (2014-2020)*

\_\_\_\_\_, 2016, *National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period Up to 2030*

\_\_\_\_\_, *Baseline Situation Analysis*

\_\_\_\_\_, *Combined Delivery Report (CDR) and Independent Auditor’s Report for the Period January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017*

\_\_\_\_\_, *Concept of the SMART Wildlife Patrol System in Tajikistan*

\_\_\_\_\_, *Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria for Snow Leopard Projects (Tajikistan)*

\_\_\_\_\_, *Government Decree – On State comprehensive program for the development of environmental education and population of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period until 2020, Dated April 2, 2015, No. 178*

\_\_\_\_\_, *Government Decree - On the Procedures and Amounts of Compensation for Damage Caused to the Forest Fund and Other Plant and Animal Objects by Individuals and Legal Entities – Dated December 31, 2014, No. 790*

\_\_\_\_\_, *Government Meeting Protocol No. 9 – August 30, 2018*

\_\_\_\_\_, *Government Meeting Protocol No. 12 - November 29, 2018*

\_\_\_\_\_, *Independent Auditor’s Report for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018*

\_\_\_\_\_, January 20, 2017, *Kathmandu Resolution*

\_\_\_\_\_, January 24, 2017, *Press Release: Ministers uphold their support for snow leopard conservation - All twelve snow leopard range countries attend high-level meeting in Nepal, reiterate their commitment to the objective of securing 20 snow leopard landscapes across the cat’s range by 2020*

- \_\_\_\_\_, *Law of the Republic of Tajikistan About Environmental Protection - Dated July 18, 2017, No. 1449*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Law of the Republic of Tajikistan About Fauna - Dated January 5, 2008, No. 354*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Law of the Republic of Tajikistan About Hunting - Dated July 17, 2014, No. 705*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Law of the Republic of Tajikistan About Pastures - Dated March 19, 2013, No. 951*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Law of the Republic of Tajikistan About Pastures - Dated June 20, 2019, No. 1618*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Memorandum of Understanding Between Ministries of Environment, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, The State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Ecology and Environmental Protection on the conservation of the snow leopard , its production facilities, ecosystems and landscapes in the Western Tien Shan and Pamir-Alai*
- \_\_\_\_\_, October 14, 2019, *Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan About the National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change of the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period Until 2030 (No. 482)*
- \_\_\_\_\_, October 23, 2018, *Women Rangers to the Rescue*
- \_\_\_\_\_, October 2013, *Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program – A New International Effort to Save the Snow Leopard and Conserve High-Mountain Ecosystems*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Regional Conference – Seminar on International principles of cross-border cooperation and national aspects in the implementation of GSLEP (October 29-31, 2019) – PROTOCOL*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Regional Conference – Seminar on International principles of cross-border cooperation and national aspects in the implementation of GSLEP - existing and for the future (October 29-31, 2019)*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Save National Heritage of Tajikistan*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Several Maps (key snow leopard areas, forests, pastures, ecosystems, topography, zoning map of Sangvor nature reserve, protected areas) produced by the project*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Small Grants Program (SGP) Review of Implementation and Results Achieved*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Summary report on the Alichur festival (August 4, 2019), Photos and Videos*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Bishkek Declaration on the Conservation of Snow Leopard*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Tajikistan 2016-2020*
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Voluntary National Review: Improving Living Standards through Mainstreaming of Sustainable Development Goals into the National Development Policy in Tajikistan*

## **Annex 7: Interview Guide**

*Note: This is a guide for the Review Team (a simplified version of the review matrix). Not all questions were asked to each interviewee; it was a reminder for the interviewers 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 Tajikistan to strengthen its capacity to sustainably manage, use and conserve natural resources in high-altitude mountain ecosystems?**

- 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 Tajikistan’s capacity to sustainably manage, use and conserve natural resources in high-altitude mountain ecosystems?
- 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 components and objective of the project been achieved?**

- II.1. How is the Project effective in achieving its expected outcomes/components?
  - o Conservation and sustainable management of key biodiversity areas
  - o Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in wider landscape outside protected areas
  - o Support to international cooperation
- II.2. Does the project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation?
- II.3. How is risk and risk mitigation being managed?

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

- II.4. What lessons have been learnt for the project to achieve its outcomes/components?
- II.5. 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.6. How could the project be more effective in achieving its results?

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

- III.1. Is adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?
- III.2. Do the *Strategic 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. Is the government engaged?
- III.12. To what extent are partnerships/ linkages between institutions/ organizations encouraged and supported?
- III.13. Which partnerships/linkages are facilitated? Which one can be considered sustainable?
- III.14. What is the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? (between local actors, UNDP, and relevant government entities)
- III.15. Is an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise as well as local capacity?
- III.16. Did the project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the project?

***Future directions for the project***

- III.17. What lessons can be learnt from the project on efficiency?
- III.18. 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 enhancing the conservation, and the sustainable use of natural resources in the biodiverse high-altitude mountain ecosystems of Tajikistan?***

- IV.1. Will the project achieve its objective that is *conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tian Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods?*
- IV.2. What are the impacts or likely impacts of the project on the local environment; poverty; and, other socio-economic issues?

***Future directions for the project***

- IV.3. 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?***

- 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. Are there any environmental risks linked to the implementation of the project?
- V.7. Does the project contribute to key building blocks for social and political sustainability?
- V.8. Are project activities and results being replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up?
- V.9. What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of efforts?

***Future directions for the project***

- V.10. Which areas/arrangements under the project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results?
- V.11. What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed?

## Annex 8: Fact-Finding Mission Agenda

**Preliminary Agenda**  
**For the fact-finding mission of the Independent Mid-Term Review Team**  
**for the MTR of the UNDP GEF Project**

***“Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alay and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods”***  
**December 5 – 18, 2019 – Tajikistan**

Date	Time	Activity	Remarks
Thursday, 05 December 2019	04:25 13:00-14:30	<i>Arrival MTR Team Leader to Dushanbe, Tajikistan</i>  Briefing with the Project Manager and project team	Mr. Neimatullo Safarov, Project Manager Mr. Khisravshoh Shermatov, project Field Coordinator on Protected Areas; Ms. Tatiana Novikova, project Field Coordinator on Knowledge Management; Mr. Vladimir Lekarkin, project Administrative Assistant; Mr. Dilovarsho Dustov, project Finance Assistant;
	15:00-16:00	Meeting with the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the GEF Focal Point	Chairman of the Committee for Environmental Protection, the GEF Focal Point, Mr. Davlatsho Gulmahmadzoda
Friday, 06 December 2019	09:00-13:00  12:00-13:00	Meeting with the National Executing Agency – National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center (NBBC)  Working meeting with project team	Olimjon Yatimov, Head of NBBC  Snow leopards' project team
	13:00-14:00 14:00-16:00	<i>Lunch</i>  Briefing with UNDSS  Briefing at UNDP-Tajikistan	Mr. Shavkat Kakharov, UN Field Security Associate  Nargizakhon Usmanova, Team Leader on Climate Change, DRR, Energy and Environment
Saturday, 07 December 2019	8:00-12:30  12:30-13:30  13:30-14:00	<i>Route Dushanbe - Shamsiddin Shohin District</i>  <i>Lunch</i>  Meeting with administration of Jamoat Shurobod, visiting sites on restoration of pastures and forests ( <b>notes #6</b> )	Mr. Rustam Safarov, Secretary of Jamoat Shurobod, Shamsiddin Shohin District

Date	Time	Activity	Remarks
	14:30-15:00 15:00-16:00 16:00-18:00	Meeting with JSC "Saodat", visiting construction of a corral (within the project SGP interventions)  <i>Route Jamoat Shurobod– Jamoat Yol</i>  Meeting with Dehkan Farm "Khojiyon-2011", visiting construction of a corral (within the project SGP interventions) ( <b>notes #10</b> )	Mr. Nazriev Saydali, Head of JSC "Saodat", Shurobod settlement, Jamoat Shurobod, Shamsiddin Shohin District  Mr. Nuronsho Fayzov, Head of Dehkan Farm "Khojiyon-2011", Jamoat Yol, Shamsiddin Shohin District
Sunday, 08 December 2019	08:00-09:00 09:00-10:30 10:30-12:00 12:00-13:00 13:00-14:00 14:00-18:00	<i>Route Jamoat Yol - Jamoat Dashtijum</i>  Meeting with Public Organization "Kuhistoni Dashtijum", visiting project SGP site on energy efficient technologies at school and polyclinic ( <b>notes #7</b> )  Meeting with Forestry Department in Dashtijum – project activities on rehabilitation of forests and pastures and on capacitating environmental staff through training and equipping with uniforms and outfits ( <b>notes #8</b> )  <i>Lunch</i>  Meeting with dehkan farm "Gayratali" – project activities on rehabilitation of forests in the Tagi Siyahkuh locality ( <b>notes #9</b> )  <i>Route Jamoat Dashtijum– Darvoz District;</i>	Mr. Saidov Bobohon, Head of PO "Kuhistoni Dashtijum", Jamoat Dashtijum, Shamsiddin Shohin District  Mr. Makhmujon Akhmadzoda, Head of Forestry Department in Dashtijum, Jamoat Dashtijum, Shamsiddin Shohin District  Mr. Gayratali Nazriev, Director of Dehkan Farm "Gayratali", Jamoat Dashtijum, Shamsiddin Shohin District  Review of project activities in Darvoz district
Monday, 09 December 2019	07:00-13:00 13:00-14:00 14:00-15:00 15:00-15:50 16:00-16:30	<i>Route Darvoz – Khorog city, Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO)</i>  <i>Lunch</i>  Meeting with the Department for Environmental Protection in GBAO: project interventions in strengthening environmental staff capacities, project support in establishing a Museum of Nature in Murgab  Meeting with the Directorate of the Tajik National Park: cooperation with the project, strengthening staff capacities of the Tajik National Park	Mr. Mirkamol Nazaraliev, Chairman of the Department for Environmental Protection in GBAO, Khorog, GBAO  Mr. Devlokh Mirzoev, Director of the Tajik National Park, Khorog, GBAO

Date	Time	Activity	Remarks
	16:45-17:00 17:10-17:30	Meeting with the Pamir Biological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan: <i>project support in monitoring and installation of camera traps in Pamir</i>  Meeting with Public Organization "Tabiat Pomir": <i>conduction of workshops and trainings on inventory and monitoring of wildlife, conduction of Snow Leopard Festival in Pamir</i>  Meeting with Public Organization "Zanon dar Kuhhoi Pomir" ("Women of Pamir Mountains"): <i>interventions on capacitating women and girls, awareness raising activities, conduction of Snow Leopard Festival in Pamir</i>	Mr. Abdulnazar Abdulnazarov, staff scientist of the Institute, Khorog, GBAO  Mr. Dovutsho Navruzshoev, Director of PO "Tabiat Pomir", Khorog, GBAO  Ms. Furoough Shakarmamadova, Head of PO "Zanon dar Kuhhoi Pomir", Khorog, GBAO
Tuesday, 10 December 2019	06:00-12:00 12:00-13:00 13:00-14:00 14:00-16:00 16:00-18:00 18:00	<i>Route Khorog city – Murgab District, GBAO</i>  <i>Lunch</i>  Meeting with the Department for Environmental Protection in Murgab District: <i>project interventions in Murgab, including establishing a high-altitude garden, Marko Polo Museum</i>  <i>Route Murgab District – Alichur district, GBAO</i>  Meeting with Hunters' Association of Tajikistan: <i>visiting Snow Leopard Rehabilitation Center, objects of Snow Leopard Festival - 2019 (including obelisk and statue of snow leopard); review of project support in equipping and outfitting the staff of the Association for monitoring</i>  <i>Overnight stay at Kumdi camp, Alichur district, GBAO</i>	Mr. Amriddin Nazarov, Director of the Department for Environmental Protection in Murgab, Murgab District, GBAO  Mr. Timur Sohibkulov, Director of LLC "Bars-2010" Mr. Karakul Sohibkulov, Director of LLC "Bars-2010", Alichur District, GBAO
Wednesday, 11 December 2019	07:00-11:00 11:00-12:20 12:20-13:00 13:00-13:30	<i>Route Alichur District – Khorog city, GBAO</i>  <i>Helicopter flight on the route Khorog – Sangvor (*upon flight weather conditions)</i>  <i>Lunch</i>  Meeting with the Sangvor Section of the Tajik National Park: <i>activities on demarcation of boundaries of the protected area, construction of check points, capacitating PA staff with training,</i>	Mr. Hasan Rajabov, Director of the Sangvor Section of the Tajik National Park, Sangvor District

Date	Time	Activity	Remarks
	13:30-14:00	uniforms, outfits, salaries, communication means, furniture, transport  Meeting with the Pasture User Union of the Sangvor District: <i>interventions on rehabilitation/restoration of pastures and forests, project material and goods support for rehabilitation/restoration activities</i>	Mr. Saymaddin Gafurov, Director of the Pasture User Union of the Sangvor District, Sangvor District
	14:00-14:40	<i>Helicopter flight on the route Sangvor – Sarikhosor (*upon flight weather conditions)</i>	
	14:40-15:10	Meeting with the Head of Sarikhosor Jamoat: <i>project interventions on restoration/rehabilitation of forests and pastures, equipping and outfitting environmental staff of the Sarikhosor Nature Park (protected area), establishing Center for wildlife monitoring and training center on alternative energy sources</i>	Mr. Khasan Ibrohimzoda, Head of Sarikhosor Jamoat, Mr. Jurakhon Muhabbatov, Director of Sarikhosor Nature Park, Jamoat Sarikhosor, Baljuvon District
	15:10-15:40	Visiting demo site on alternative energy sources.	Mr. Khasan Ibrohimzoda, Head of Sarikhosor Jamoat, Mr. Safarbek Rakhimov, Dashtaro Settlement, Baljuvon District
	15:40-16:30	Meetings and visiting project SGP sites on restoration/rehabilitation of forest and pasture ecosystems in snow leopard habitat areas	Mr. Kiyomiddin Zoirov, Director of Dehkan Farm "Said Muhriddin" Mr. Makhmud Iskandarov, Director of dehkan farm "Shodilang", Sarikhosor Jamoat, Baljuvon District
	16:30-17:50	<i>Helicopter flight on the route Sarikhosor – Dushanbe (*upon flight weather conditions)</i>	
Thursday, 12 December 2019	09:00-10:00	Meeting with GEF Small Grants Programme: <i>joint initiatives</i>	Mr. Khurshed Kholov, Programme Manager, UNDP - Energy & Environment, the National Coordinator of the GEF Small Grants Programme
	10:30-12:00	<i>Meeting with the State Institution for Specially Protected Natural Areas: implementation of project interventions on equipping rangers with vehicles, salaries, communication means; capacitating PA staff through project workshops and trainings</i>	Mr. Suhrob Mahmudov, Director of the State Institution for Specially Protected Natural Areas
	12:00-13:00	<i>Lunch</i>	

Date	Time	Activity	Remarks
	13:30-15:00	Meeting with the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Institute for Zoology and Parasitology under the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan: <i>project interventions (in partnership with the Academy and its institutions) on scientific monitoring, inventory of wild animals, installation of camera traps, development of the Action Plan for conservation of snow leopard ecosystems, etc.</i>	Mr. Abdusattor Saidov, Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan; Mr. Fayzali Hakimov, Director of the Institute for Zoology and Parasitology
	15:30-18:00	Meeting with State Institution “Pasture-Meliorative Trust”: <i>joint activities on restoration of pastures, project support with materials and goods to reduce the load on pastures and forests, project educational and training activities.</i>	Mr. Nazarali Safarov, Director of State Institution “Pasture-Meliorative Trust”
Friday, 13 December 2019	09:00-12:00	Working with project team	Snow leopards' project team
	12:00-13:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
	13:00-17:00	Working with project team	
Saturday, 14 December 2019	09:00-12:00	Meeting / workshop with project partners and experts	Project experts on forests, pastures, mapping, monitoring, as well as from project key stakeholder and partner organizations
	12:00-13:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
	13:00-17:00	Meeting / workshop with project partners and experts	
Sunday, 15 December 2019	09:00-11:00	<i>Route Dushanbe-Iskanderkul, Ayni District</i>	
	11:00-13:00	Meeting with Forestry Department in Ayni District – <i>project support in equipping with materials and goods for restoration/rehabilitation of forest and pasture ecosystems, capacitating, training and outfitting environmental staff</i>	Mr. Behruz Mavlonov, Head of Forestry Department in Ayni District
	13:00-14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
	14:00-16:00	Visit to Iskanderkul Wildlife Sanctuary, demo site on restoration of forests	Mahmadi Jumaev, staff member of Iskanderkul Wildlife Sanctuary, Ayni District
	16:00-18:00	<i>Route Iskanderkul - Dushanbe</i>	
Monday, 16 December 2019	09:00-17:00	Working with project team / any other business	Snow leopards' project team
Tuesday, 17 December 2019	09:00-17:00	Working with project team / any other business	Snow leopards' project team

Date	Time	Activity	Remarks
Wednesday, 18 December 2019	09:00-12:00	Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings	Snow leopards' project team
	12:00-13:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
	13:00-15:00	Debriefing at UNDP-Tajikistan	
Thursday, 19 December 2019	05:55	<i>Departure MTR Team Leader from Dushanbe</i>	

## Annex 9: List of People Interviewed

**List of People met during MTR fact-finding mission**

	Name	Position	Organization
Mr.	Davlatsho Gulmahmadzoda	Chairman / GEF Focal Point	Committee for Environmental Protection
Mr.	Abdusattor Saidov	Vice-President	Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan
Mr.	Suhrob Mahmudov	Director	State Institution for Specially Protected Natural Areas
Mr.	Fayzali Hakimov	Director	Institute for Zoology and Parasitology
Mr.	Nazarali Safarov	Director	State Institution “Pasture-Meliorative Trust”
Ms.	Nargizakhon Usmanova	Team Leader on Climate Change, DRR, Energy and Environment	UNDP
Mr.	Christophoros Politis	Deputy Resident Representative	UNDP
Mr.	Khurshed Kholov	Programme Manager, Energy & Environment / National Coordinator of the GEF Small Grants Programme	UNDP
Mr.	Olimjon Yatimov	Head	NBBC
Mr.	Neimatullo Safarov	Project Manager	Project
Mr.	Khisravshoh Shermatov	Project Field Coordinator on Protected Areas	Project
Ms.	Tatiana Novikova	Project Field Coordinator on Knowledge Management	Project
Mr.	Vladimir Lekarkin	Project Administrative Assistant	Project
Mr.	Dilovarsho Dustov	Project Finance Assistant	Project
Mr.	Shavkat Kakharov	Field Security Associate	UN
Mr.	Rustam Safarov	Secretary	Jamoat Shurobod, Shamsiddin Shohin District
Mr.	Nazriev Saydali	Head	JSC “Saodat”, Shurobod settlement, Jamoat Shurobod, Shamsiddin Shohin District

	Name	Position	Organization
Mr.	Nuronsho Fayzov	Head	Dehkan Farm “Khojiyon-2011”, Jamoat Yol, Shamsiddin Shohin District
Mr.	Saidov Bobohon	Head	PO “Kuhistoni Dashtijum”, Jamoat Dashtijum, Shamsiddin Shohin District
Mr.	Eshonov Odinakhuja	Deputy Head	Forestry Department in Dashtijum, Jamoat Dashtijum, Shamsiddin Shohin District
Mr.	Gayratali Nazriev	Director	Dehkan Farm “Gayratali”, Jamoat Dashtijum, Shamsiddin Shohin District
Mr.	Mirkamol Nazaraliev	Chairman	Department for Environmental Protection in GBAO, Khorog, GBAO
Mr.	Devlokh Mirzoev	Director	Tajik National Park, Khorog, GBAO
Mr.	Abdulnazar Abdulnazarov	Staff Scientist	Institute, Khorog, GBAO
Mr.	Dovutsho Navruzshoev	Director	PO “Tabiat Pomir”, Khorog, GBAO
Ms.	Furough Shakarmamadova	Head	PO “Zanon dar Kuhhoi Pomir”, Khorog, GBAO
Mr.	Amirbek Qumchibekov	Specialist	Department for Environmental Protection in Murgab, Murgab District, GBAO
Ms.	Sulaimonkhonova Kurbongul	Specialist	Department for Environmental Protection in Murgab, Murgab District, GBAO
Ms.	Oshurova Dildora	Specialist	Department for Environmental Protection in Murgab, Murgab District, GBAO
Mr.	Timur Sohibkulov	Director	LLC ”Bars-2010”
Mr.	Karakul Sohibkulov	Director	LLC ”Bars-2010”, Alichur District, GBAO
Mr.	Hasan Rajabov	Director	Sangvor Section of the Tajik National Park, Sangvor District
Mr.	Saymaddin Gafurov	Director	Pasture User Union of the Sangvor District, Sangvor District
Mr.	Khasan Ibrohimzoda	Head	Sarikhosor Jamoat
Mr.	Jurakhon Muhabbatov	Director	Sarikhosor Nature Park
Mr.	Safarbek Rakhimov		Dashtaro Settlement, Baljuvon District
Mr.	Kiyomiddin Zoirov	Director	Dehkan Farm “Said Muhriddin”
Mr.	Makhmud Iskandarov	Director	Dehkan Farm “Shodilang”, Sarikhosor Jamoat, Baljuvon District
Mr.	Behruz Mavlonov	Head	Forestry Department in Ayni District

	Name	Position	Organization
<b>Debriefing Workshop on December 17, 2019</b>			
A total of 27 participants from Partners' organizations			
<b><i>Key Partners met during the workshop</i></b>			
Mr.	Alikhon Latifi,	Chair	Association of Hunters of Tajikistan
Mr.	Irgashev T.A		Institute of animal husbandry, Tajik Academy of Agricultural Sciences
Mr.	Bobokalonov		State Institution “Pasture-Meliorative Trust”,
Mr.	Ustyan I.P		Scientific research institute of forestry
Mr.	Rahimov F.		Academy of science of the Republic of Tajikistan
Mr.	Safarov S.K		PO Noosphere
Mr.	Rajabov K		State Institution for Specially Protected Natural Areas, Shahrinav district
Mr.	Kubodov M		FAZO, State Committee for Land Management and Geodesy
Mr.	Khairulloev R		Committee for Environment Protection
Mr.	Najmidinov N		Deputy director of State Institution for Specially Protected Natural Areas
Ms.	Nasirova F		Committee for Environment Protection
Mr.	Irgashev S,		Nagoya Protocol

Met a total of 51 people (6 women and 45 men).

## Annex 10: Initial List of Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Proposed Role in Project
<b>National Government</b>	
Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee will play an oversight and guidance role in the project particularly as it pertains to conservation and sustainable management of key protected areas and ecosystem resilience and connectivity outside of protected areas. This will be achieved through representation on the project steering committee and consultation with officials from the local level offices.</li> </ul>
Ministry of Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry will be represented on the steering committee of the project to ensure effective consultation relating to project activities pertaining to ecosystem resilience and connectivity outside of protected areas.</li> </ul>
Ministry of Economy and Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry will be represented on the steering committee of the project to ensure effective consultation relating to project activities pertaining to the development of incentives for alternative livelihood opportunities to reduce the impacts on grasslands and forestry.</li> </ul>
Committee for Land Management, Geodesy and Cartography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee will serve as a reference to and provide guidance on matters relating to land use and land use planning.</li> </ul>
The Forestry Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Forestry Agency will play a leading role as an institution in implementing the project through its four operational units which fall under the Division for Forestry, Fauna and Flora Protection and Hunting within the Agency. These units are the Forestry and Hunting Inspectorate; the Department of Special Protected Natural Areas; the State Forest Institution; and the Scientific Institute of Forestry.</li> </ul>
National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Center has been identified as the lead executing agency of this project and will take overall responsibility for co-ordinating, monitoring progress and reporting on the project.</li> </ul>
The Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Academy will play the role of providing a scientific perspective to project decisions and actions as well as being the beneficiary of a number of the project interventions.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional and local government</b>	
Regional government (Hukumat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A representative of the Hukumat will sit in the project steering committee and will mediate two-way communication between national policy directives and local project activities and actions to ensure that there is good alignment between them.</li> </ul>
District Government (Jamoat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district government will play an important role in supporting the implementation of the project in selected areas (in the project domain). They are likely to be direct beneficiaries of capacity development activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Local NGO and NPOs</b>	
Jamoat Resource Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals will be direct beneficiaries of capacity development activities.</li> </ul>
Micro-financial institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals will be direct beneficiaries of capacity development activities.</li> </ul>
Local and national NGOs such as Zan va Zamin, Bars Consulting, Noosfera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NGOs will provide specific communication and awareness support to ensure that the project is clearly understood and to encourage active involvement and participation in the project and its activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Local communities</b>	

Stakeholder	Proposed Role in Project
Local farmers (communities in the buffer zones of protected areas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local farmers will be consulted through the project in relation to potential conflict mitigation techniques, alternative livelihoods, and land uses. They are likely to be direct beneficiaries of capacity development activities. They will be involved in the planning related to aspects of the project and will contribute to the implementation of the needs and priorities of local and national decision-making processes.</li> </ul>
<b>International Partners</b>	
Secretariat of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection programme (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These partners will participate in knowledge sharing and technology transfer exercises as well as communications on data collection and sharing, best practices for planning and priority-setting.</li> </ul>
Panthera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication and awareness raising. Support for activities and interaction (communication) and raising awareness in favor of the rural community / farmers</li> </ul>
Development partners (e.g. German Government, World Bank, FAO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development partners supporting snow leopard and prey conservation projects and initiatives to improve the sustainable management of snow leopard habitats in Tajikistan will be important project partners. They will share, coordinate and collaborate with the project as and where relevant. May be represented on the Project Steering Committee.</li> </ul>

Source: project document

## Annex 11: MTR Rating Scales

As per UNDP-GEF guidance, the MTR Reviewing Team 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).

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (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.

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (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.

Ratings for Sustainability: (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 12: Audit Trail**

The audit trail is presented in a separate file.

## **Annex 13: Evaluation Report Clearance Form**

### **EVALUATION REPORT CLEARANCE FORM**

for the Mid-Term Evaluation Report of the UNDP-GEF-Government of Tajikistan Project:  
“*Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pamir Alay and Tien Shan Ecosystems for Snow Leopard Protection and Sustainable Community Livelihoods*”

Tajikistan  
(PIMS 5437)

*Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by*

**UNDP Country Office**

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

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

**UNDP RTA**

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

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