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

Tajikistan

Terminal Evaluation Report

GEF AGENCY: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

EXECUTING AGENCY: National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre (NIM)

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Prepared by Irina Golomina, International Consultant, contributed by Azam Orifov, National Expert, July 2022

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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), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and/or of the Government of Republic of Tajikistan.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APR	Annual Progress Report
BD	Biodiversity
CEP	Committee on Environmental Protection
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FC	Field Coordinator
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH)
GSLEP	Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection (Programme)
IP	Implementing Partner
ICTA	International Chief Technical Adviser
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JRC	Jamoat Resource Centre
KM	Knowledge Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review(er)
NBBC	National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre
NEA	National Executing Agency
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
N/A	Not Applicable
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NPO	Non Profit Organization
NSLEP	National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Priorities
PAA	Project Administrative Assistant
PFA	Project Finance Assistant
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PO	Public Organization
PPG	Project Preparatory Grant
PRF	Project Results Framework
ProDoc	Project Document
PUU	Pasture User Union
RoT	Republic of Tajikistan
RTA	Regional Technical Adviser
SC	Steering Committee
SESP	Social and Environmental and Social Screening Protocol
SI	State Institution
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound
SPNA	Special Protected Nature Area
Tajik NP	Tajik National Park
TE	Terminal Evaluation(-ator)
TOR	Terms of Reference

UN	United Nations
UNCBD	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP -CO	UNDP Country Office
UNDP-RSC	UNDP Regional Service Centre
USD	United States Dollar

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Irina and Azam, August 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report presents the results of the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the UNDP-GEF full-sized project titled “Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alay and Tian Shan ecosystems for Snow Leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods” in Tajikistan (PIMS 5437).
2. The TE was performed by Ms. Irina Golomina, an independent international consultant, together with Mr. Azam Orifov, a national expert.

Project Background and Context

3. “Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alay and Tian Shan ecosystems for Snow Leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods” in Tajikistan (PIMS 5437) is a 5-year project with the GEF budget of \$4,181,370 implemented by UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency. The project National Implementing Partner is the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre. The project started on 03 August 2016 and is in its final year of implementation.
4. The Snow Leopard (*Panthera Uncia*) is a true flagship species for the high mountains of Central and South Asia. Currently, there are 4,000 to 7,000 snow leopards left in the wild. Their elusive nature and high-altitude habitat make them very difficult to find and study or to gain a more precise population estimate. The snow leopard is one of the most iconic animals in the world and an ambassador of the diverse peoples and cultures that share and shape its habitat.
5. 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 km², which represents 60% of the total territory of the country and about 2.8% of the current global range of the species. 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 animals - significantly lower than the approximately 1,000 individuals prior to the 1980’s.
6. Illegal trade, conflict with humans, lack of conservation capacity, and loss of prey have been identified as threats to this endangered species within Tajikistan. Loss of key prey species is thought to be responsible for increasing instances of depredation by snow leopards on domestic animals. With lower prey numbers, in particular Marco Polo sheep, markhor, urial and ibex, snow leopards are increasingly resorting to killing domestic livestock. This shift has resulted in increased human-snow leopard conflicts, where snow leopard depredation frequently results in retaliatory killings by farmers. Conflict between humans and snow leopards is likely to intensify as people seek to increase their use of more of the higher altitude pastures, and for longer periods of time. Increased numbers of people moving into previously remote areas is further resulting in an increase in the frequency of incidents of roadkill’s, snaring and poaching of both snow leopard and their prey. In addition, snow leopards are being hunted for trophies as well as for their pelts.
7. 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 GSLEP provides the overarching implementation framework for improving the conservation status of snow leopards, wild prey, and their ecosystems across the entire snow leopard range. The long-term solution sought by the GSLEP (and the individual participating countries) is characterized by, inter alia: (i) the maintenance or increase in snow leopard numbers to form viable populations; (ii) the maintenance or increase of prey numbers to support viable snow leopard

populations; (iii) a reduction in the predation and mortality of livestock, and decreased killing of snow leopard and prey; (iv) the maintenance or restoration of habitat quality and connectivity to ensure the gene flow between snow leopard and prey populations; (v) a reduction in the rate of degradation of snow leopard and prey landscapes; (vi) reduced poaching and smuggling of snow leopard and prey, and their products; (vii) baselines that are established to track progress and effectiveness of conservation programs, enable adaptive management and enable identification of priority areas for protection; (viii) an enabling policy environment, and capacitated institutions, to deter wildlife crime and enact incentives for local communities to protect and conserve; (ix) a general public, resource users and decision-makers who are informed and educated about snow leopard ecosystems and the values associated with them; and (x) an increased capacity for better trans-boundary coordination between national and local institutions across the snow leopard and prey range. The foundation of the GSLEP is a set of 12 National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Priorities (NSLEP) developed by each range country government.

8. The “Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alay and Tian Shan ecosystems for Snow Leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods” project in Tajikistan directly supports the implementation of the priority actions contained in the NSLEP for Tajikistan. 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.

9. The project was formulated to address the following key barriers to the effective conservation of snow leopard, wild prey and their ecosystems in Tajikistan:

- Limited resources for, and capabilities in, the planning and management of protected areas;
- Unsustainable land use management practices outside the protected areas;
- Incomplete information and knowledge management systems for management decision-making and trans-boundary cooperation.

Consequently, the project strategy is focused around the following four strategic areas of intervention:

- 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.

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

11. The first component supports the development and implementation of a smart patrol system including in two sections of the Tajik National Park (NP), a World Heritage Site. Work under this component is focused on 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 beneficitation from, protected areas (Output 1.4).

12. The second component was designed as an incremental assistance 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 on 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).

13. The third component is aimed strengthen the state of knowledge of, and collaboration in, the conservation of snow leopard and their ecosystems. Work under this component is focused on 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).

Table 1: Project Information Table

Project Title: Conservation and Sustainable Use of Pamir Alay and Tien Shan Ecosystems for Snow Leopard Protection and Sustainable Community Livelihoods		
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #): 5437		PIF Approval Date: October 20, 2014
GEF Project ID (PMIS #): 6949		CEO Endorsement Date: May 13, 2016
ATLAS Business Unit, Award # Proj. ID: TAJ10, Award ID 00085264, Project ID 00092973		Project Document (ProDoc) Signature Date (date project began): August 3, 2016
Country(ies): Tajikistan		Date project manager hired: August 9, 2016
Region: Europe and CIS		Inception Workshop date: November 4, 2016
Focal Area: Biodiversity, Land Degradation, Sustainable Forest Management		Midterm Review completion date: January 2020
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective: GEF 6 BD-1, BD-2, BD-4, LD-3, SFM-1, SFM-2, SFM-3		Planned closing date: August 2, 2021
Trust Fund [indicate GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]: GEF TF		If revised, proposed op. closing date: July 31, 2022 (12-month extension approved)
Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner: National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre (NBBC)		
Other execution partners: Committee for the Environmental Protection, PA Agency under the Committee, Forestry Agency, Pasture Meliorative Trust, relevant NGOs (Tagoba, Noosphera), local administrations and self-governance structures (khakimats and jamoats)		
Project Financing	<i>at CEO endorsement (US\$)</i>	<i>at Terminal Evaluation (US\$)</i>
[1] GEF financing:	\$ 4,181,370	\$ 4,181,370
[2] UNDP contribution (cash):	\$ 410,000	\$ 440,000

[2*] UNDP parallel co-financing:	\$ 6,000,000	\$ 6,000,000
[3] Government:	\$ 11,200,000	\$ 10,087,520
[4] Other partners:	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 3,625,900
[5] Total co-financing [2 + 3+ 4]:	\$19,610,000	\$ 13,713,420
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1 + 5]	\$23,791,370	\$ 17,894,790

TE ratings and summary assessment

14. The TR assigns the **overall progress rating** as Satisfactory (S). The Outcome rating is MS for Outcome 1, S for Outcome 2, and S for Outcome 3. The ratings are supported with the following principal **findings and conclusions**.

15. The TE confirms that the project design fully addresses the country priorities analysed in 2014-2015 during project development phase. The country ownership is re-confirmed. The project concept remains in line with the national development priorities and plans of the country. The governmental buy-in and the national ownership at the level of the project Implementing Partner is key to the project implementation success and its long-term sustainability.

16. In comparison to many other GEF-funded projects in the region, this intervention was very targeted, designed in great detail and focused on very concrete capacity building actions, demonstration of benefits from change of land use practices, awareness and outreach activities. This was a project with many plans and many tangible and visible results, a relatively small-scale intervention that managed to make a big difference. The most significant and long-standing **achievements and highlights** are described below.

17. Perhaps some of the most visible global environmental benefits generated by the project are associated with a significant change from the baseline capacities of the targeted protected areas to ensure improved protection, monitoring and control efforts. The GEF increment towards a more secured regime and better management, monitoring and enforcement capacities for the protected areas covers 435,513 ha of the Tajik National Park and Sangvor zakaznik. The main institutional beneficiary of this work, the PA Agency under the Committee for Environmental Protection, confirms that, while the governmental plans to improve the PA capacities were prioritised in many plans and documents, without the GEF increment, a notable shift from a limited management effectiveness and basic capacities towards a more effective monitoring, patrolling and enforcement work of the PAs would not have been possible within a 5-year term. The data on the keystone species populations shows that this increment was essential for the effective conservancies at the core of this project. The focus was on the range of the snow leopard, the national symbol, the “noble spirit¹”, a globally threatened species at the top trophic level of the high-mountain ecosystems that are arguably the most valuable natural asset of the country.

18. The management capacity scorecard (METT) shows an increase in the total score from 20 to 53 for the Lakhsh section (a 265% increase) and from 20 to 57 (a 285% increase) for the Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park. The TE notes that the baseline score is unusually low if compared to the same category PAs in the region; the “typical” baseline scores for the national parks in Altay-Sayan and Pamir-Alay eco-

¹ Snow leopard is called озода паланг in Tajik, which refers to the illusive and smart dominant spirit roaming in a clean environment. Snow leopard is recognized as an indicator of a healthy, resilient high-mountainous ecosystem and its local name has been reflecting this recognition for centuries. This also shows why the local stakeholders were so receptive to this project - and why they have applied themselves a lot to its success - since the snow leopard seems to hold such a significant role in their heritage.

regions are 40-47. While a baseline score of 20 was a very conservative assessment, the mid-term scores were too high; this should probably be attributed to the fact that the expert team was not experienced in PA management capacity assessment, and that the baseline and mid-term assessments were done by different experts. The current scores hopefully translate a more realistic picture. As to the Sangvor Refuge, there was no METT assessment for it as it was planned for inclusion into the Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park. As these plans did not materialise, the baseline METT assessment for the refuge was performed at the project completion.

19. The improved METT scores for the two sections of the National Park are reflective of a more secured status of the area, which was ensured by demarcation of protected area boundaries and construction of check-points to ensure control at the national park entry points. Technical capacities of the national park were ensured via procurement of vehicles, equipment, and communication tools, provision of uniforms and toolkits for fieldwork. The project increment aimed at enhancement of PA monitoring and enforcement capacities included the development of a wildlife monitoring concept and development of the smart patrolling system adapted to the conditions of Tajikistan. The staff of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP, Sangvor Refuge and the PA Agency (altogether 450 people including additionally hired rangers and community liaison officers) increased their knowledge and skills in implementing the smart patrolling system, wildlife monitoring, wildlife inventory and reporting through workshops and training offered by the project.

20. The project has provided an essential capacity building increment to the PA Management in establishing a core of professionally trained and fully equipped rangers to implement a smart patrol system. The project engaged relevant international expertise for applying modern technologies in spatial patrolling and monitoring to the mountainous areas of Tajikistan with limited accessibility and irregular internet coverage, and customising the existing data collection and database management systems for smart patrols in Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of the Tajik NP and the Sangvor Refuge. 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, first aid) was designed and deployed to the protected areas, as the PA management institutions and other relevant stakeholders engaged in wildlife monitoring. The smart patrol system was introduced for the first time in Tajikistan, and it is the only comprehensive monitoring and control instrument in the national protected areas. While full integration of patrol data into park planning and management is still a work in progress, the integration of the smart patrol data with the data management system of the Committee for Environmental Protection has been ensured.

21. The project failed with its plans to change the status of the Sangvor zakaznik (IUCN cat. IV) into the Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park (IUCN cat.II) since, after the governmental reform of 2020, the zakaznik remained subordinate to the Forestry Agency while the national park is managed by the PA Agency under the Committee for Environmental Protection. The project is criticised by the TE for a) waiting for two years, since the project start in 2017, with the preparation of a package of draft documents (which, by the way, does not include a comprehensive study of BD values nor economic assessment) for the refuge transfer, and not “making hay while the sun shines”, i.e. initiating the transfer right after the Inception Workshop where such intention was openly confirmed²; and b) declaring, ever since 2020, that the issue was beyond the project scope and influence and not coming up with any adaptive management attempt. The project has invested into the technical capacity building of the Sangvor section of the Tajik

² It is understood that the project was waiting for the end result of the boundary demarcation of both the Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park and the Sangvor refuge and could not initiate the transfer before the actual area of the refuge was confirmed. It seems a valid explanation for the delay, however, two years does seem a long time to wait with a critical intervention, and in this case, a fatal delay that determined the failure of the original project plans.

National Park with the assumption that some of these capacities will cover the expanded area as the Sangvor Refuge becomes a part of the National Park. The project provided for improved management capacities in Sangvor zakaznik through training, provision of transport (motorcycles, horses, donkeys), equipment, infrastructure, demarcation of boundaries and implementing the smart patrol system. Yet, these capacities are still insufficient for effective protection, control, monitoring and enforcement, but, most importantly, these functions are not at the core of the refuge's management objectives. Nominally those are present, however, the main management objective is to ensure and control effective (and sustainable) use of the pasture and forest resources within the refuge. A forest refuge (zakaznik) mostly deals with sustainable use of forest and grassland resources and NTFP, whereas the National Park has protection, patrolling, monitoring and enforcement as the primary objectives. Also, the refuge has been initially established for 10 year with a possibility for prolongation, and there's a risk, at least formally, that its functioning may be discontinued in 2023. The TE makes recommendations to the Project Implementing Partner, the Committee for Environmental Protection, and the Forestry Agency with an overarching objective to reduce these risks and establish a management regime of the refuge in accordance with its objectives (confirmed by comprehensive assessments) and capacity needs assessment, although without a formal transfer, and to conclude a cooperation agreement between the National Park and the refuge management authority.

22. Another aspect for criticism from the TE is the end-of-project impact value and sustainability of the output related to temporary engagement of 18 rangers for the Tajik NP. In the Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park, three rangers supported by the project will continue working as PA staff after the project's closure, whereas five were employed by the local forestry division. In the Lakhsh section, unfortunately, all 10 rangers hired by the project left in the last year of project implementation (due to significant salary decreases). The project had justified hiring of the additional rangers given the absence of capacity to obtain the data of the PA values and their threats, to ensure comprehensive monitoring and for patrolling within the snow leopard range. Now, with the number of rangers almost back to baseline, the capacities are still insufficient, even though the remaining rangers received the training and can do their patrolling and monitoring work more professionally with the SMART patrol system in place and supported by equipment and means of communication. In the initially designed strategy, the management of protected areas would have to take care to find an opportunity to engage the rangers permanently and pay from extra-budgetary funds, or to agree with them that they will be temporarily involved. Unfortunately, the protected areas could not offer adequate financial conditions to keep rangers on a permanent basis, and there seemingly is no intention to engage them on a temporary basis (e.g., for the spring-summer period). The TE does not consider it the best practice, and would not recommend any further intervention in the upcoming projects where a change in the PA finance is considered a prerequisite for the long-term sustainability and a meaningful impact; the PA financial situation is still at the project baseline level and the overall financial risks to the project sustainability are considered to be high.

23. The project considerably enhanced the capacities and coverage for wildlife monitoring country-wide. By introducing the innovative smart patrol system, strengthening technical and human capacities in the targeted PAs and engaging surrounding communities in the PA management and protection, the area of the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of the Tajik National Park has been covered by comprehensive wildlife monitoring. Along with that, enforcement capacities have been strengthened as well, as evidenced by the increased number of stopped attempts at illegal hunting of wildlife and incidents of forest cutting in the PAs. Workshops and training on wildlife monitoring and inventory, principles of smart patrolling, use of camera traps for detecting wildlife, including snow leopards, and interpretation of data for proper reporting were offered to PA staff and community rangers. The core staff of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP, Sangvor Refuge and the PA Agency, rangers and community liaison officers improved their skills through online training conducted on smart patrol system, methods of wildlife inventory and

installation of camera traps for identification of animals in Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP. The project offered SMART patrolling protocols and methodology for the organisation of public monitoring. The Guidelines developed with the project support are in use by the Academy of Sciences, the PA agency and the Forestry Agency.

24. In five years since the project start, the number of incidents of poaching of snow leopard and its prey, as well as other illegal incidents in the protected areas, has been reduced to almost zero, as reported by the targeted PAs and reflected in the SMART server database. Protected area staff and public patrol rangers have been equipped with communication devices (radio sets, phones, satellite phones, GPS devices). The combination of all these measures helped to improve protection capacities and timely detection and prevention of illegal hunting/poaching in protected areas, resulting in the overall decreasing number in poaching and other illegal incidents. Project community liaison experts, jointly with administration of Sangvor and Lakhsh section of Tajik NP and local communities, conducted workshops and meetings devoted to the methods of detection of illegal hunting, elimination of poaching factors, participation in monitoring and protection of protected areas. Local communities are actively involved in the protection of snow leopard ecosystems around protected areas and help the administration of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik National Park to timely identify illegal activities within the territory of the PAs.

25. The project facilitated the agreements between the administration of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP and the local communities living around these PAs on benefit sharing: NTFPs and other local resources, including firewood, medicinal herbs, beekeeping products are distributed on the 50/50 principle between the local residents and PA administration, allowing the communities to receive income from the sale of products and thus improve their welfare. The project hired two community liaison experts from the local community representatives. However, the initial Prodoc plans included the establishment and administration of the co-management structure (i.e. Park Management Committee) for the Jirgital and Tavildara sections of Tajik NP. This was an important co-management element for the GEF increment under Component 1; while the project did a lot to support community engagement from the areas within and adjacent to the PAs, no co-management mechanisms have been tested nor put in place.

26. The project should be praised for the scope and results of work aimed at involvement of local communities into wildlife monitoring, sustainable pasture management, adoption of alternative fuel sources for conservation of the forests in the snow leopard range, and for restoring and rehabilitating degraded pasture and forest areas. The TE confirms the essential contribution of the project in strengthening the wildlife enforcement and networking capacities of the local stakeholders, including local communities.

27. The project work outside the PA has exceeded the initial expectations on many fronts and was based on active involvement of local stakeholders and sustainable stakeholder coalitions, such as Pasture User Unions and Forest Management Committees reporting to the sectoral government (the Pasture Meliorative Trust and the Forestry Departments) and the local governance structures (khakimats and jamoats). The project exceeded the target impact value for the sustainable pasture management and reports 438,286 ha of high-altitude grasslands (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas to be under a regulated and sustainable management regime, and reached the target 15,050 ha of high-altitude forests (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas which were set under a sustainable management regime.

28. The project justified, tested and promoted the regulations on the decrease in the number of days of use of high-altitude pastures. Procurement of hay was a demonstration of an effective method for reduction of the number of days of livestock grazing in the pastures located in key snow leopard habitats by 20 days, as it would enable the livestock to be fed on this forage and kept in temporary stands/landings.

This will allow for reduced periods of grazing in summer pastures and prevent overgrazing and land degradation. The project raised awareness of livestock holders regarding their benefits from a delayed spring transhumance. The project developed methodological recommendations on the methods of reducing the number of days of grazing and restoration of high-altitude pastures and conducted consultations and training for all the relevant stakeholders. The project-born recommendations for decreasing the number of days of use of high-altitude pastures and other techniques to reduce their degradation were embedded as approved amendments to the Law on Pastures.

29. In strict accordance with the Project Document, the project developed 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). The project supported the establishment of four Pasture User Unions (in addition to six already existing) and, jointly with the PUUs, prepared ten pasture management plans, with a specific focus on the high-altitude pastures. These pasture management plans included maps of forage areas; maps 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; and a monitoring system. The project offered technical and grant funding support to PUUs and individual pastoralists in the implementation of more sustainable pasture management practices in the high altitude pastures. The project reports 428,256 ha of high-altitude pastures covered by sustainable pasture management plans under implementation. The recommendations of the project experts for the Pasture User Unions to develop high-altitude pasture management plans have been included as part of amendments and additions have been introduced to the Law on Pastures.

30. The project provided targeted investments for implementation of highly visible and replicable demos and models aimed to a) incentivise the adoption of more sustainable pasture management practices in the high altitude pastures; b) demonstrate alternatives to wood for delivery of energy and fuel needs in rural communities, c) rehabilitate and restore the ecological functioning of heavily degraded high altitude grasslands, d) rehabilitate degraded high altitude forests; and (iv) the project reports 10,030 ha of high-altitude pastures in Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas to have been rehabilitated or restored and are used in a sustainable manner (Shahristan, Ayni, Rasht, Tojikobod, Lakhsh, Sangvor, Muminobod, Khovaling and Shamsiddin Shokhin districts). The project has directly invested in rehabilitation of 30,000 ha of high-altitude pastures via procurement of seeds and tools for the Pasture User Unions. Along with that, under project small grants 30 ha of high-altitude pastures were restored by public organizations, dehkan farms in Shamsiddin Shohin, Tojikobod, Darvaz, Muminobod and Sangvor districts. Forest restoration areas account for 6,050 ha.

31. Thanks to technical capacity buildings and training deployed by the project, the country area covered by regular snow leopard (and its prey) monitoring activities has expanded more than double from the baseline and makes 25% of snow leopard range and 20% for prey. The project National Implementing Partner concluded cooperation agreements for implementing the snow leopard and prey monitoring activities with the National Academy of Sciences, Hunters' Association of Tajikistan, Sangvor section of Tajik National Park, Institute of Zoology. The project has provided funds for the camera traps installation and incremental financing (proportional to the co-financing from the above partners) for monitoring and reporting. The agreements cover the areas in Murgab, Darvaz, Zorkul, Sangvor and Lakhsh districts identified during the project development phase, thus ensuring the expansion of the monitoring coverage of snow leopard habitats as planned at the project onset. The partners confirmed to the TE their intention and capacity to implement monitoring activities covering the reported areas at their own expense.

32. The reliability of data on snow leopard population and the number of primary snow leopard pre-project populations in Tajikistan has significantly increased, with the direct impact from the project in the

following two directions: a) Installation of camera traps for snow leopard and prey monitoring, in order to enhance data coverage and ensure reliable data updates which allowed cumulatively from the project start, the project supported installation of 112 camera traps covering the total area of 362,673 ha in Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP, Sarikhosor Nature Park, Zorkul Reserve, and also in snow leopard habitat areas in Khorog and Murghab, and b) enhanced PA species protection and wildlife monitoring capacities.

33. Under its Outcome 3, the project facilitated a number of trans-boundary agreements targeting the snow leopard and its ecosystem. Initially, the target was to focus on trans-boundary collaboration in the management of wildlife crime, however, as the project influence in this particular area alone would have been limited, the idea was to facilitate and stimulate inter-governmental dialogue and agreements for joint action. A Protocol was signed in March, 2018 between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan on establishing trans-boundary cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, which includes joint activities on inventory of snow leopards and assessment of its prey resources, monitoring of mountainous areas and status of large migratory species of wildlife, and the research and conservation of migratory species of wild animals. In April 2019, the project organized a regional meeting in the Sughd region with the participation of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan. The Sughd Resolution was adopted reflecting the decisions taken on the implementation of measures on conservation of the snow leopard ecosystems at the regional level. Finally, in October, 2020 Tajikistan ratified the Agreement of the Central Asian countries on snow leopards.

34. The project has partially achieved the planned level of impact related to the National Action Plan (NAP) for snow leopard conservation. A Draft National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation was approved at the expert level in July, 2021 through a series of final inter-agency consultations led by the Academy of Sciences. Individual programs of the NAP have been implemented with project support by the National Academy of Sciences, its subordinate institutes and other project partners (including the Committee for Environmental Protection). The programs under implementation address the partners' capacity-building in using innovative technologies, reducing the risk of poaching, and developing programs for research and monitoring of wild ungulates and snow leopards. The results of pilot action implementation have been incorporated into the final draft of the National Action Plan. Based on the formal interagency review, the NAP will be approved by responsible executive agencies in accordance with existing rules for approval of such documents, tentatively by the end of 2022. As initially identified, the key executive agencies will be the National Academy of Sciences and the NBBC.

35. Overall, the TE confirms that the project met or exceeded expectations for most of the target indicator at the level of Objective and Outcomes. The following **areas where project impact was limited** were identified:

- Failure to ensure a higher conservation status (IUCN cat. II) to the area of Sangfor refuge;
- Lack of impact on the financial sustainability of PAs;
- Delayed preparation and adoption of the National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation.

36. The TE believes that the project design was key to its success. Quoting the MTR, the Project Document was used as a "blue print" throughout the project implementation. There were, however, certain elements in the project design that were not pursued during the project implementation (please refer to [Adaptive Management](#) section for detail).

37. The project has effective **stakeholder engagement** through various partnership approaches. The number of partnership agreements concluded by the project is enormous, and some of the partnerships, if not all, will have a long-term effect and will continue after project completion. The TE confirms the

project success in strengthening partnerships and resource mobilization, including both with external actors and UNDP cross-cutting initiatives. Project co-financing exceeded the expectations at the project start. In addition to the initially programmed co-finance of main stakeholder and the contribution of existing partners, new partnerships were engaged that allowed to cover all project targeted areas with the interventions on capacitating local environmental staff and the communities, including women and girls. Stakeholder coalitions at the local level, such as Pasture Users Unions and Forest Management Committees “attached” to the local governance bodies, if engaged in a transparent, inclusive and mutually beneficial manner, become the institutional basis of the project sustainability.

38. The awareness raising and PR activities of the project were implemented with high impact and vigour not because there were planned and financed and, therefore, had to be implemented, but because the team saw a real impact and feedback from implementing them.

39. The project **risk assessment** at the project onset was perfectly sound. However, the risks were not detailed to the level of concrete project activities. While certain output- and activity-level risks have been added at the project inception, the overall risk assessment was generic and wasn’t linked to concrete project endeavours. This generic picture remained valid till the project end; there was no need to revise the generic management responses to the generic (albeit valid!) risk assessment.

40. The project **financial management** is considered to be adequate, responsive to the high standards of UNDP with a decades’ record of quality support to NIM in the country. The financial controls, including reporting and planning, follow UNDP standards and requirements. The IP has implemented an excellent operational risk prevention measure at the project onset when they hired a representative of an auditor company qualified for HACT audits in order to receive a training on procurement of goods and services according to both the UNDP and the national procurement rules.

41. The project **M&E** aspects are rated satisfactory. The TE joins the National Implementing Partner in the highest rating of the level and quality of on-site monitoring ensured by the UNDP CO as part of their core project oversight functions.

42. The **management arrangements** for the project were planned at the outset of the project and reflect the country-specific best practice for the decision-making and the day-to-day implementation of project activities. The project Implementing Partner, the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre (NBBC) of the Committee for Environmental Protection, is central for the project management and its successful operation. The NBBC brings in a decade-long track record of engagement of best available knowledge and expertise country-wise and brings in an invaluable asset of cooperation, positive experience and mutual trust with the principal institutional partners, local and regional authorities and local communities. The TE confirms that despite the understaffing and the 1-year extension, the project was implemented in an efficient and results-focused manner, with highly capable and professional staff and quality oversight by the National Director and UNDP. The project administration, reporting, and financial management were conducted in an appropriate manner, with no material deficiencies nor substantive weaknesses. The Project National Director, together with the team, maintained the NBBC’s legacy and the track-record of proficiency and reliability in the team’s daily work with the partners. The TE praises the team management and work ethics standards applied at the project Implementing Partner’s office and through their communication with the project stakeholders.

43. The project is criticized by the TE for low visibility of project results and impact. The project accomplished a great deal; however, it is difficult to physically trace the project heritage outside the project office. The project produced and distributed brochures, training and awareness materials on the issues of snow leopard and ecosystem conservation, however, the project work, impact, and sustainability

heritage is not particularly visible online; the project failed to collect and disseminate best practices and lessons learnt from the project interventions.

44. Another piece of criticism relates to the project team's tendency to rely exclusively on internal resources for planning, implementation, reporting, and sustainable phase-out. By not searching for the top-notch tailored advice internationally the project team and stakeholders missed the opportunity to build their own capacities and learn, but also limited the opportunities for the project to bring in innovation, best practice and best available knowledge to the region. The TE's own experience and the observation of the project team's work during the last weeks of project performance justify (without questioning the team's professionalism) the recommendation to consider engaging outside help when the team's capacity is strained, be it a complicated case of an innovative patrolling system, the best practice for ecosystem restoration, or an exit strategy for the project that would be prepared in time, supported with comprehensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders, and would actually work.

45. The project **sustainability** is rated ML as explained in the [respective section](#) of the TE report.

Terminal Evaluation Ratings:

Table 1: Evaluation Ratings Table for UNDP-GEF project "Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alay and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods" (PIMS 5437)

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating ³
M&E design at entry	S
M&E Plan Implementation	S
Overall Quality of M&E	S
Implementation & Execution	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	S
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	S
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	S
Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	HS
Effectiveness	S
Efficiency	S
Overall Project Outcome Rating	S
Sustainability	Rating
Financial resources	MU
Socio-political/economic	L
Institutional framework and governance	L
Environmental	L
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	ML

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

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".

³ Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, Implementation/Oversight & Execution, Relevance are rated on a 6-point scale: 6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability is rated on a 4-point scale: 4=Likely (L), 3=Moderately Likely (ML), 2=Moderately Unlikely (MU), 1=Unlikely (U)

5	<i>Satisfactory (S)</i>	<i>The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.</i>
4	<i>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</i>	<i>The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.</i>
3	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)</i>	<i>The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.</i>
2	<i>Unsatisfactory (U)</i>	<i>The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.</i>
1	<i>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)</i>	<i>The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.</i>

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	<i>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</i>	<i>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”.</i>
5	<i>Satisfactory (S)</i>	<i>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.</i>
4	<i>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</i>	<i>Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.</i>
3	<i>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</i>	<i>Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.</i>
2	<i>Unsatisfactory (U)</i>	<i>Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.</i>
1	<i>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)</i>	<i>Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.</i>

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

Additional ratings where appropriate

Not Applicable (N/A)

Unable to Assess (U/A)

Key Recommendations

The specific recommendations for the project phase-out are as follows:

1. For UNDP and IP, to support the project operational and financial closure with a comprehensive exit plan. As agreed during the TE meeting with the UNDP CO, make sure that all pending contract commitments are closed (including two incomplete construction/repair objects) before the project financial closure.

2. For the NIM IP, to prepare a sustainability plan and communicate its key actions and responsibilities to the principal stakeholders. Present both the exit plan and the sustainability plan at the project final Steering Committee meeting.
3. For the NIM IP as an institutional successor of the Project Team, to make the project's main achievements visible, analyze the end-of-project impact for your stakeholders and for the general public, and present it through leaflets, articles, success stories. Collect and disseminate best practices and lessons learnt from the project interventions. In particular, document the lessons learnt from, and good practices in, the development and implementation of the smart patrol system to guide the future expansion of smart patrols to other PAs. Consider placing the "exit" products above at the NBBC's website, making sure that the website has references to the knowledge products developed by the project.

The recommendations, reflecting on specific outputs or aspects of this project's performance, are as follows:

4. For the NCBB, to consider implementing the course of actions suggested by the TE in response to the failure with the project plans to re-classify the Sangvor refuge, as presented in [para 127 of the TE report](#).
5. For the NCBB, to plan a dedicated meeting with the Forestry Agency to discuss the findings, results and recommendations of the Terminal Evaluation. Discuss the plans of this project that did not materialize, as listed in [para 93 of the Adaptive Management section of the TE Report](#), and could be brought forward within the context of the upcoming GEF 7 project. Promote a more prominent role for the Agency in the upcoming project, as a partner, decision-maker (in the SC), and a liaison to the project area-based forestry management units.

The TE recommendations that are intended to further enhance the capacity for implementing future projects⁴ include:

6. It might be more efficient for the project reporting processes to record the impact and effect of a concrete measure or intervention right when one sees it on the ground. The PMU is advised to create a reporting data base, an evidence base and the project knowledge base as the project progresses with the implementation and not only when it's actually time to report. Special attention should be given to the evidence base for PIR reporting, including the co-financing evidence. The PMU might consider specific instruments developed during this TE, such as the SGP Results and Resources Table, the Co-financing Tracking Table, and the Beneficiary Tracking Tool, for future use and modification. Also, the M&E for the future projects should be strengthened where it concerns project adaptive management: any adaptive management action should be justified, recorded, and discussed openly and transparently. This is particularly relevant to the project onset plans that do not tend to materialize.
7. The ToRs for the project substantive activities directly contributing to the achievement of the Results Framework targets should include improved reporting requirements, so that the substantive reports from subcontracts backed up with figures, maps, etc. could be used as evidence of project achievements. These are to be attached to the annual PIRs and verified by the MTR and TE. The reports should include an executive summary with the description of the task, its scope, methodology and results, and quantitative and qualitative statements of impact. the

⁴ The recommendations are addressed to the future PMU of the upcoming GEF-7 FSP, as well as to NBBC and the UNDP CO

ToRs should also include the indicators of performance for the output/activity to be contracted, in accordance with the Results Framework and Monitoring Plan for the project, which are annexed to the Project Document and amended as required in the course of project adaptive management. Relevant indicators and means of verification should be proposed by the ToRs developer and agreed to with the contractor as part of the contract conditions. If more than one report is commissioned to support the project reporting for a particular RF indicator, the Component Leader or CTA should prepare an evidence note summarizing all relevant reports and their findings, impact indicators and qualitative and quantitative evidence of impact and progress. UNDP and NCBB should consider an enhanced capacity building effort aimed at potential and actual project contractors, so that the contract requirements are met, the ToRs get fully implemented, and the contract reporting (including qualitative and quantitative evidence of progress against project performance indicators) is improved.

8. The TE advises NCBB to invest in professional help with the format of contracts, agreements, cooperation LOAs, letters of intention, etc., entered into by NCBB in its capacity as the project Implementing Partner. It is understood that NCBB generally follows one particular contract form based on the LOA with UNDP on provision of project support services. This format a) is not particularly relevant for cooperation agreements where two parties cooperate in implementation of parallel activities and ensure synergies and co-financing, and b) does not particularly respond to the nature of most contractual works (not services) engaged by the project. The contract forms should be reasonable, responsive to the principal requirements of UNDP procurement and financial policies, and should not contain statements nor conditions that are not reflective of the nature of contracted works or services, or are alien to the national contractual regulations and practices. The contracts should be free from elements that might potentially create risks to the relationship with the project partners or reveal weaknesses for potential legal cases (such as intellectual property rights, penalty for delayed performance, etc.).
9. Based on the most recent GEF guidelines, the PMU should develop a process for yearly confirmation and verification of the project co-financing. Every year, as part of the annual reporting (PIR) exercise, the PMU should be collecting firm evidence to confirm the co-financing. Copies of evidence should be maintained by the UNDP CO for any audit purpose, as well as made available for verification by the independent project terminal evaluation. For the parallel co-financing from sectoral ministries, specific guidance with the relevance criteria should be developed by the UNDP CO in cooperation with the sectoral stakeholders. This will ensure reliability and consistency of reporting and evidence. The methodology for collecting information on co-financing which has materialized should be streamlined; the formats for reporting and evidence should be shared with the partners and supported by relevant capacity building exercise. The current version of the NCBB co-financing letter can be used as a model.
10. The IP together with the future GEF 7 project team might consider preparation of two budget revisions a year, one in March and the second one toward the year-end, to ensure that the ASL for January-February of the following year is approved beforehand and the project does not have to wait for it in the new year.
11. The future project(s) might consider engaging international consultants as an outside help when the team's capacity is strained, be it a complicated case of an innovative patrolling system, the best practice for ecosystem restoration, or an exit strategy for the project that would be prepared in time, supported with comprehensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders, and would actually work.

12. A timely preparation of the exit strategy and a sustainability plan is vital for a successful project phase-out. The exit strategy supported by a costed exit plan, and a sustainability plan for the project should be embedded in the project M&E design.

INTRODUCTION: TE SCOPE, APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

46. The TE process followed the [Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#).

47. According to the TE ToR ([Annex 1](#)), the **purpose** of the evaluation is to provide an independent external view of the progress of the project at its completion, and to provide feedback and recommendations to UNDP and project stakeholders. The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

48. The specific **objectives** of the Terminal Evaluation were to:

- Assess progress toward achievement of expected project objective and outcomes
- Identify and document lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project and
- Make recommendations necessary to help consolidate and support sustainability of the project results.

49. **Scope of the TE:** As per the evaluation Terms of Reference (TORs), the terminal evaluation reviews the actual performance and progress toward results of the project against the planned project activities and outputs, based on the standard evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, results and sustainability. The evaluation assesses progress toward project results based on the expected objective and outcomes, as well as any unanticipated results. The evaluation identifies relevant lessons for other similar projects in the future and provides recommendations as necessary and appropriate.

50. As pointed out in the [Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#), the TE retained its focus on the following key aspects:

- Verification and assessment of implementation and results
- Accountability
- Identification of project's successes in order to promote replicability
- Actions necessary for consolidation and sustainability of results
- Emphasis on Lessons learned
- Inform design of future projects.

51. **Key features of the TE methodology and approach:** The TE builds upon evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful. The TE team assisted by the National Implementing Partner followed a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts, project consultants, the UNDP Country Office, the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser a.i., and other implementers and key beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Stakeholder involvement included interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to government counterparts, in particular the Committee for Environmental Protection and the GEF Operational Focal Point, the national Implementing Partner, the State Institution for Specially Protected Natural Areas, the Forestry Agency, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan and its subordinate institutes; UNDP Country Office and Project Team; key experts and consultants in the subject area, project partner NGOs and CSOs. The TE included interviews with key government stakeholders to be conducted by the TE team in Dushanbe, and the "verification" field missions to the project direct impact sites to be performed by the TE National Expert.

52. The TE process was organized with a view to minimize the logistical and administrative burden on the team in the remaining – extremely limited! – project timeframe. Since the TE timing overlapped with the timelines for the project final reporting to the donor (2022 PIR), the TE offered her assistance to the Project Team with regard to the project final reporting (PIR), documentation of lessons learned, discussion of the project exit strategy and creation of analytical products aimed to communicate the final project results and assessments, as part of the project documentary heritage. The TE benefitted a lot from comprehensive discussions with the Project Team that took place before and after the interviews with the key development and management partners for the project.

53. It was the TE's intention for the TE exercise not to be perceived as a stand-alone external obligatory exercise, but used as an opportunity for the project stakeholders to reflect on the project achievements, shortcomings, lessons learned and best practices, and to continue an open and constructive dialogue discussing project performance, successes and bottlenecks. The TE specialists tailored the TE interviews to the purpose of discussing the remaining project implementation issues and unfinished tasks, the indicators where progress was still expected, and, most importantly, on post-project sustainability, replication and scaling up of project results.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

54. The Snow Leopard (*Panthera Uncia*) is a true flagship species for the high mountains of Central and South Asia. Currently, there are 4,000 to 7,000 snow leopards left in the wild. Their elusive nature and high altitude habitat make them very difficult to find and study or to gain a more precise population estimate. The snow leopard is one of the most iconic animals in the world and an ambassador of the diverse peoples and cultures that share and shape its habitat. The snow leopard is included in the IUCN Red List (2000) as an endangered species (EN C2A). As a large predator, the snow leopard occupies the top link of the trophic chain and serves as a typical indicator for assessing the state of the high mountain ecosystems of Central Asia. High mountains ecosystems, where the snow leopard is distributed, are among the most fragile and vulnerable ecosystems on Earth, and snow leopard is a flagship species of the high mountain ecosystems of Central Asia. The well-being of the population of this species reflects the well-being and normal functioning of high mountain ecosystems in general.

55. Sited 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 km². 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 assessment is around 180-220 individuals. Snow leopards are closely associated with the alpine and sub-alpine zones above the tree line, but they are known to also frequent open coniferous forest. Medium-sized mountain ungulates - especially the Siberian ibex (*Capra sibirica*), Marco Polo sheep (*Ovis ammon polii*) and markhor (*Capra falconeri*) - serve as the primary prey species for snow leopards in Tajikistan.

56. 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.

57. Snow Leopard habitats in Tajikistan are closely associated with the high-altitude forests and pastures. Illegal logging and harvesting of fuelwood is threatening biodiversity in the region's forests. While officially-sanctioned logging has decreased in some areas over the past few years, illegal logging persists. High-altitude pastures are affected by the negative consequences of overgrazing. Overgrazing is causing significant environmental damage over much of the Tajikistan rangelands, especially in the autumn-winter ephemeroid

and absinth pastures and in the summer steppe pastures of the Kuramin range (in the north-eastern part of the country). Secondary plant communities now occupy 80% of the rangelands in the sub-alpine belt. Grazing of cattle in forested areas is also disturbing the undergrowth and affecting forage availability for wild ungulates.

58. 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. The estimated carrying capacity of the pastureland in the country is 1.36 million head of sheep, while the actual number of sheep is estimated at 4-5 million head. Similarly, as new economic incentives - particularly production of cashmere - encourages farmers to increase their goat herds, they are expanding their range and moving stock into more remote mountains which, until recently, have served as a refuge for the snow leopards and their prey.

59. The competition for food with large and growing domestic livestock populations is resulting in a reduction of snow leopard's wild prey numbers, which already live at relatively low densities due to the low productivity of the habitat. Moreover, with lower prey numbers, snow leopards are increasingly resorting to killing domestic livestock. Livestock have been reported as providing as much as 40–70% of the snow leopards diet (although it is generally thought to be more in the order of 15–30%) in Tajikistan. This shift has resulted in increased human-snow leopard conflicts, where snow leopard depredation frequently results in retaliatory killings by farmers.

60. Conflict between humans and snow leopards is likely to intensify as people seek to increase their use of more of the higher altitude pastures, and for longer periods of time. Increased numbers of people moving into previously remote areas is further resulting in an increase in the frequency of incidents of roadkill's, snaring and poaching of both snow leopard and their prey. In addition, snow leopards are being hunted for trophies as well as for their pelts. Extensive poaching by local communities of species that naturally form the prey base of snow leopard (e.g. Siberian ibex, Marco Polo sheep and markhor) is a further threat to the survival of snow leopards.

61. Approximately 75% of the country's snow leopard population have been recorded within the protected area estate. While the IUCN Category I, II and IV protected areas (i.e. Wilderness Areas, National Parks and Nature Refuges) in Tajikistan should provide a safe haven for snow leopards and their prey, and secure the preservation of their natural habitats, in practice the conservation status of a protected area does not imply effective protection on the ground. The protected areas are collectively suffering from a severe lack of human and financial resources, and conservation actions are only being partially implemented (if at all) in most of the de facto protected areas. The project baseline scenario describe the limited capacities of protected areas as one of the primary barriers towards effective conservation of snow leopard and its ecosystem. Law enforcement and ranger patrol activities in protected areas are extremely limited, and is further compounded by the poor infrastructure (e.g. ranger stations, ranger lookout posts) and limited availability of equipment (e.g. binoculars, uniforms, back packs, weapons) and transport (e.g. vehicles) for PA ranger staff. Law enforcement efforts in PAS are further hampered by the ineffectual demarcation of protected area boundaries. There is also no integrated approach to wildlife crimes by targeting traders and trade chains and including the judiciary, police and prosecutors as key partners in tackling syndicated poaching problems. Ranger staff salaries are low, there are limited financial (or other) incentives to retain staff, while the working conditions for PA staff are relatively harsh, and the risk of injury while on patrol is not uncommon.

62. The PAs are heavily dependent on periodic short- to medium-term funding and technical support from a range of development partners to supplement the shortcomings in their capital, operational and human resource budgets. Indications are that government budget allocations are, in the light of other more pressing demands on the national budget, not likely to increase over the medium-term to fill any financing gaps in PAs. PAs are generally considered a financial 'drain' on national, regional and district government resources, and there is a reluctance to allocate scarce funds to improve the planning and management of PAs. There is no compelling business case to motivate an increase in government funding of the PA network, notably through

investments in nature-based tourism infrastructure and facilities that could contribute to improving the long-term financial sustainability of the PAs. There are very limited ecotourism development options (primarily due to the lack of infrastructure) and means for PA income raise or diversification.

63. There is a general lack of management, technical and professional skills in the staff complement of most PAs. The administration of most PAs is not being guided by contemporary strategic and operational management plans, with most management plans - where they exist – already more than 10 years old and increasingly irrelevant to the existing and emerging management challenges facing PAs. The management planning system for PAs is also not performance-based, and there is no objective mechanism to regularly monitor, review and document the financial and operational performance of PAs. Most PAs are run by forestry, enforcement and administrative staff who have limited or no training in budgeting, strategic planning, financial management systems or cost-effective approaches to protected area operations.

64. In 2020, the State Institution for Protected Areas was transferred from the Forestry Agency) to the subordination of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. This institutional reform affected the project plans with the Forestry Agency as has been illustrated further in the report.

65. There are very low levels of awareness prevailing among communities living in adjacent villages about the real need to protect snow leopard and prey habitats and corridors, and the means to do this. There are few examples of meaningful collaboration between the SPNAs and adjacent communities in the protection of snow leopard, their prey and key habitats. Limited efforts are being made to support the social and economic development of local communities living in and around SPNAs (mostly being implemented by NGOs) - most of whom still rely on access to natural resources for part of their livelihood - despite the fact that proactive measures to improve the living conditions in these communities may significantly reduce the extent and intensity of threats to the ecological integrity of the sanctuaries ecosystems, habitats and species.

66. While the above effects are associated with the key barrier of insufficient PA management capacities, there are multiple negative consequences on the snow leopard and its ecosystem associated with the unsustainable land use management practices outside the protected areas. Snow leopards naturally range widely through the landscape, and any effort aimed at securing their long-term survival needs to ensure that they are able to move safely between the formal protected areas. Preventing the further fragmentation of landscapes - in order to ensure connectivity corridors between protected areas - as well as protecting and rehabilitating critical habitats is crucial for the sustainable conservation of snow leopard in Tajikistan. However, the size, remoteness, and harshness of snow leopard territories make this particularly challenging. Weak wildlife law enforcement is a chronic problem across the snow leopard's range, with no capacity for anti-poaching efforts outside the network of PAs. Further, as human use of snow leopard landscapes increases and intensifies – driven by social and economic imperatives - unsustainable levels of use is further degrading the quality and productivity of habitats, making the safe movement of snow leopard and prey increasingly difficult and less likely.

67. With the livestock industry being the main subsistence livelihood of rural populations living in the snow leopard distribution range, the livestock numbers - and associated demand for access to highly productive pastures - is growing. However, the available mountain pastures are coming under increasing grazing pressure, resulting in the incremental degradation and loss of productivity of these pastures as a result of overstocking and a reliance on the same mountain areas every season for grazing. While there are already well-established traditional (e.g. seasonal grazing systems, seasonal burns) and modern approaches (e.g. rotational grazing, supplementary feeding, stock number controls, rehabilitation of degraded areas) to address this challenge, there is however no strategic approach to coordinate efforts to improve the management of pasture lands across the snow leopard landscapes. There is no clear public institution directly responsible for the strategic planning and operational oversight of pastoral farming.

68. There is limited understanding and knowledge of the current state of pastures in the snow leopard range, and hence no clear indication of the specific extent of the need for rehabilitation and restoration of montane grasslands and meadows. There are currently no successful grassland rehabilitation projects in the region that could serve as demonstration projects for scaling up of efforts to rehabilitate degraded grasslands for pasture use. While there are some agricultural subsidy and micro-credit schemes, these tend to be focused on crop agriculture and do not provide sufficient incentive for a shift towards more sustainable forms of pastoralism. There is virtually no technical or extension support provided by public agencies to local livestock farmers.

69. Current livestock farming practices are an important factor in the ongoing degradation and destruction of forests, but there are no measures in place (e.g. pasture management plans) to mitigate the effects of unsustainable levels of livestock grazing and browsing in natural forests. Another significant threats to forest ecosystem comes from illegal cutting practices. Around 70% of the rural population use wood as principal fuel. The only legal domestic source of fuel wood (or indeed any wood) is sanitary cutting and forest clearing operations. The existing forestry regulations are complex and often contradictory - and do not actively prevent illegal cutting of, and poaching in, forests. Little attention is being paid to mitigating the effects of forest wood-cutting on the ecological integrity and functioning of forest ecosystems, and there are few ecosystem-based forest rehabilitation and restoration efforts being tested and implemented in the country.

70. There is a significant lack of awareness and understanding of the plight of the snow leopard; the value of snow leopards, prey, and habitat; and the local and regional consequences of the ongoing degradation of ecosystems. The data on the snow leopard, prey and habitats produced from sporadic monitoring efforts is highly fragmented and in multiple formats. There is a real need for knowledge-sharing about biodiversity and cultural resources and exchange of skills and experience, including cooperative research and information management. Poaching and illegal trade across boundaries needs to be better controlled, including joint patrols and border inspections to stem illegal wildlife trafficking. The scientific and management institutions in Tajikistan are often working in relative isolation from their counterparts from other home range countries as a result of the low levels of inter-governmental cooperation in snow leopard conservation. Where there is occasional collaboration it remains informal and largely opportunistic and ad hoc.

71. There are no formal landscape-scale plans and mechanisms being developed and implemented to: (i) safeguard dispersal corridors between adjacent but separate core snow leopard populations; (ii) maintain the genetic variations of snow leopard populations; (iii) secure the conservation status of key prey species; and (iv) ensure the resilience of ecosystems to the effects of climate change.

72. In order to address the barriers described above as (a) Limited resources for, and capabilities in, the planning and management of PAs; (b) Unsustainable land use management practices outside PAs; and (c) Incomplete information and knowledge management systems for management decision making and trans-boundary cooperation, the project design was focused on four strategic areas: improve the conservation capacities 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".

73. 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 GSLEP provides the overarching implementation framework for improving the conservation status of snow leopards, wild prey, and their ecosystems across the entire snow leopard range. The long-term solution sought by the GSLEP (and the individual participating countries) is characterized by, inter alia: (i) the maintenance or increase in snow leopard numbers to form viable populations; (ii) the maintenance or

increase of prey numbers to support viable snow leopard populations; (iii) a reduction in the predation and mortality of livestock, and decreased killing of snow leopard and prey; (iv) the maintenance or restoration of habitat quality and connectivity to ensure the gene flow between snow leopard and prey populations; (v) a reduction in the rate of degradation of snow leopard and prey landscapes; (vi) reduced poaching and smuggling of snow leopard and prey, and their products; (vii) baselines that are established to track progress and effectiveness of conservation programs, enable adaptive management and enable identification of priority areas for protection; (viii) an enabling policy environment, and capacitated institutions, to deter wildlife crime and enact incentives for local communities to protect and conserve; (ix) a general public, resource users and decision-makers who are informed and educated about snow leopard ecosystems and the values associated with them; and (x) an increased capacity for better trans-boundary coordination between national and local institutions across the snow leopard and prey range. The foundation of the GSLEP is a set of 12 National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Priorities (NSLEP) developed by each range country government.

74. The “Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alay and Tian Shan ecosystems for Snow Leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods” project in Tajikistan directly supports the implementation of the priority actions contained in the NSLEP for Tajikistan. 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.

75. The project was formulated to address the following key barriers to the effective conservation of snow leopard, wild prey and their ecosystems in Tajikistan:

- Limited resources for, and capabilities in, the planning and management of protected areas;
- Unsustainable land use management practices outside the protected areas;
- Incomplete information and knowledge management systems for management decision-making and trans-boundary cooperation.

Consequently, the project strategy is focused around the following four strategic areas of intervention:

- 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.

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

77. The first component supports the development and implementation of a smart patrol system including in two sections of the Tajik National Park (NP), a World Heritage Site. Work under this component is focused on 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).

78. The second component was designed as an incremental assistance 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 on 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).

79. The third component is aimed strengthen the state of knowledge of, and collaboration in, the conservation of snow leopard and their ecosystems. Work under this component is focused on 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).

FINDINGS

1.1 Project Design/Formulation

Overall Assessment of the Project Design

80. The Project Document and the overall project design carry a trademark of its principal developer, Mr. James Jackelman, in how well it responds to the country priorities, strengths, issues, capacities and constraints. The project strategy is very clear, and the TE couldn't help but feel astonished by the level of detail available for the Prodoc strategy, and the relevance of each and every output and intervention. The TE concurs to the opinion expressed by the MTR that the project strategy presents an articulated set of expected results with a good logical "chain of results": activities → outputs → outcomes → objective. The project document has been very useful for the project implementation team; as stated by the MTR, it is used as a "blue-print" by the team. One big reason for very little change to the original project strategy and for the 100% validity of activities and interventions is the level of detail and the depth of the baseline and feasibility assessments at the project PPG stage. As confirmed during the TE interviews, the project PPG consultations were very comprehensive and inclusive; the stakeholder consultations, especially during the PPG field assessments, were very targeted and focused, with lots of project design and intervention elements defined, both in scope and expected impact, already at the field phase of the PPG consultations. The relevance of the suggested strategy and its individual elements and the level of detail for the individual interventions is remarkable.

81. The TE confirms that the project design fully addresses the country priorities analysed in 2014-2015 during project development phase. The country ownership is re-confirmed. The project concept remains in line with the national development priorities and plans of the country.

82. The decision-making mechanisms and management arrangements proposed for the project are sound and reflect the UNDP-GEF rules and expectations from the GEF 6 cycle projects. The management arrangements set forth in the ProDoc are believed to be fully adequate for successfully running the project. The decision-making mechanisms reflect the GEF 6 standards and best practice in terms of transparency and effectiveness.

83. The project risk assessment at the design stage is adequate. The TE questions the way the risks to the project and the SESP risks were merged for the project risk assessment; this does not respond to the modern UNDP-GEF project design practice and created problems for the project reporting due to the high risk factor

assigned for the SESP risk describing the limitations of capacity and/or political will. Generally, the risk description and the risk management responses are clear and sufficient, and, most importantly, were offered in close consultations with the national experts and stakeholders.

84. The project Inception Report confirmed the validity of the project strategy as presented in the Project Document. During the project Inception Phase, the project risks (including SESP risks) were reassessed and re-categorised; however, the change in the “capacity and political will” risk category was not reflected in the project reporting systems for technical reasons. Two more risks were added to the risk log as presented in the Inception Report. The Project Inception Report contains a comprehensive record of the changes to the project strategy down to the level of individual activities. The TE was positively surprised to see an answer to one of the very first question she had before coming on a field mission, which was “why the project decided not to even try an opportunistic fitting of miniaturized radio collars and GPS satellite technology to improve knowledge of movement patterns, habitat use, home range size and dispersal of snow leopards”. The inception report discussed limitations associated with cross-border tracking permits which was later confirmed during the TE interview with the Academy of Science; other reasons not to pursue this path are less apparent. One might question if the reasoning for another immediate change in the project strategy is sufficient: the reason for not giving a way to any feasibility study on snow leopard monitoring based on DNA was that “there is no relevant knowledge, technology capacities, and data application possibilities”; to the TE it seems a pre-mature conclusion for deleting the activity without even collecting the relevant experience from the neighboring countries with similar capacity constraints. The decision not to 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, with a fair and honest explanation that such a structure at government level would not be feasible and sustainable due to political, legislative, legal constraints. In general, the changes to the project strategy and the individual elements of project design, such as risk assessment and strategic framework have been duly recorded in the Inception Report; the level of changes and the limited number of changes indicate the relevance of the project strategy and the project workplans developed as part of the Project Document.

Project Results Framework

85. The Results Framework fully responds to the Prodoc logic of Output-Outcome-Objective hierarchy and addresses country priorities. The Logical Framework is reflective of the multi-focal nature of the project intervention strategy, where the diversity of indicators reflects the variety and number of planned activities and concrete results expected towards the project end. The Objective-level indicators respond to the GEF Core Indicators for BD, SLM, and SFM focal areas. The Outcome-level indicators mostly reflect the capacity building nature of the project and a landscape approach for managing/conserving high-mountain biodiversity. In general, the Strategic Framework adheres to the global guidance and GEF development practices, the TE notes “SMART”ness of indicators and the overall high quality and in-depth analysis for the baseline assessments, target settings, risks and assumptions.

86. 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. The TE notes that the project reports with the same impact for different-level indicators which is normal for the project with such high complexity of task but might be misleading for an outside reader. Many of the Strategic Framework indicators are gender-sensitive and call for gender-disaggregated reporting.

87. One element for criticism of the Strategic Framework and its set of indicators is the lack of indicators to assess the degree of capacities being developed with the project support. As noted by the project MTR, the M&E framework is considerably 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. The capacity building domain was sufficiently described in the project strategy, however, the Logframe (and, consequently, the project reporting) lacks indication of and focus on capacities developed and knowledge created with the project increment. The indicators and the reporting mention these elements but do not integrate assessment of on-the-ground impact, the innovation element, ownership details, sustainability, scale-up potential. This problem could have been resolved by applying a less conventional approach to reporting (see M&E section below), but it is understood that part of the problem originates with the Logframe itself.

88. The sources of verification should have been revisited during the project implementation, as the project, for the last three consecutive years, has been asked for evidence supporting the Strategic Framework reporting. One particular illustration is Indicator 1 at the level of Project Objective, “Extent (ha) of protected areas under a secure, and effectively managed, monitoring and enforcement regime”. First and foremost, such a regime is a sheer dream if one compares it to the baseline that was described very clearly in the Prodoc baseline status assessment section (a 4-year \$2mIn investment cannot ensure a shift from mere paper parks to the PAs under a secure and effectively managed protection regime). Therefore, the TE proposed a more realistic statement of progress, which is also in line with the “improved management effectiveness” wording of the respective GEF Core Indicator: “ a *more* secured regime and a better management, monitoring and enforcement capacities”. Secondly, this management improvement cannot and should not be measured by the PA reports to their management authority, as was suggested in the original Logframe – this is just not in place and this is something that could not have been ensured by the project. Instead, the TE supported the indicator reporting with evidence of the capacity building increment (list of technical capacity building activities and trainings) and the METT capacity assessment scores that illustrated an increase in PA management effectiveness. Also, a statement of the end-of-project indicator value was further expanded by a concise description of interventions illustrating the project’s direct impact on the improved PA management effectiveness, more secured regime, better monitoring, patrolling and enforcement capacities.

89. There are several indicators and parameters suggested as part of the Results Framework that are not 100% reflective of the project direct impact. The GEF projects through several cycles have been struggling with the reporting of such indicators, while the impact on these parameters is beyond the project scope. The TE would mention only one indicator as it is very typical and also very indicative of impact limitations for the particular case of Tajikistan. The project has, at the Outcome level, an indicator of total annual budget (US\$/annum) allocation for the management of IUCN Category I – IV protected areas, which was supposed to show almost 50% increase from the baseline. First, only the PAs with the planned impact from the project were meant to be considered, which is less than the entire system of Cat. I-IV PAs. Secondly, this project did not target financial sustainability of PAs per se; with a baseline like the one clearly described in the Prodoc, hence one would be a double optimist to think that a project could stimulate a double finance allocation for the PAs in the country. The project reporting shows a negligible annual increase in PA finance that does not even come close to matching the high inflation rates in Tajikistan. While the economic situation in the country does not show particular signs of getting significantly better in comparison with the baseline of 2016, this indicator, in the TE opinion, is not particularly relevant nor indicative of the project impact.

Other Project Design Aspects

90. The project design included an extensive risk assessment, a gender mainstreaming section, a stakeholder engagement plan, and a description of management arrangements for the project. All these aspects were comprehensively analysed and presented in the project document and haven’t lost their relevance at the time of project Final Evaluation.

1.2 Project Implementation

Adaptive Management

91. This section discusses four particular changes that were made to the project design and planned project outputs during implementation and presents the TE's opinion on each of four cases. The TE notes that these changes were presented to and approved by the Project Steering Committee as part of the adaptive management implemented throughout the course of project implementation and reported as such through the annual APRs (to UNDP) and PIRs (to the GEF).

1. The project decided not to pursue continuous (retainer) employment of an International Chief Technical Adviser and to hire *ad-hoc* international expertise instead. As per the SC meeting minutes (November 2018), "the scope of work initially planned for a CTA, namely development of TORs, reporting, work planning and coordination of activities was done by the NBBC (project Implementing Partner) as they had relevant capacities developed through the implementation of the earlier GEF projects. Before bringing any substantial added value, an international adviser would have to delve deeply into the specifics of territories, national departments, institutions; with these arguments, it was proposed to focus international assistance based on the actual needs of the project, without hiring an international CTA".

The TE has discussed this issue in detail with the project team and takes the liberty of expressing an independent opinion on the subject based on these discussions, as well as on many similar scenarios seen through a dozen of GEF3 – GEF6 projects in the region. There is one strong argument in support of the NBBC decision not to hire a CTA: the project strategy is clear, comprehensive, supported by extensive on-site consultations, and detailed through very focused and concrete interventions; the validity of the project strategy had been confirmed throughout the project implementation, and there was seemingly very little reason for adaptive management or re-strategising. NBBC was deeply engaged in project formulation and had demonstrated a capacity for work planning and implementation of BD conservation and SLM projects of similar scope and content. With this being said, the TE would like to express an opinion that there were aspects in project performance where the NBBC and UNDP team could have benefitted from an outside view and experience. For one such instance, the SMART patrolling system design, the project team's persistence with a) search for an appropriate model for replication and adaptation for the country case and b) the chosen course of action and the scope for an international consultancy have gained very positive results and guaranteed not only the best value for money but also the national ownership and the upscaling of the GEF intervention. This was, however, the only case where the project actually sought international experience and advice. By not searching for the top-notch tailored advice internationally the project team and stakeholders missed the opportunity to build their own capacities and learn, but also limited the opportunities for the project to bring in innovation, best practice and best available knowledge to the region. The TE notes that the project strategy and budget for Outcome 2 specifically mentioned an international high altitude forest management expert to provide technical backstopping support in: (a) identifying and profiling the high altitude forests; (b) the development of management norms, standards and guidelines for high altitude forests; and (c) the restoration/rehabilitation of degraded high altitude forests. Also, an international pasture management planning business or NGO was suggested for technical support in: (a) the development and implementation of district-based pasture norms and standards; (b) drafting of pasture management plans; and (c) preparation of grassland restoration/rehabilitation plans. Under Outcome 3, an international conservation agency or NGO was proposed to: (a) develop the national snow leopard monitoring and reporting system; (b) design and establish the snow leopard information management system; (c) host a series of specialist training sessions on the requirements, administration, maintenance and use of the two systems; and (d) facilitate the transfer (including the requisite capacity building) of the two systems to the state agency responsible for their ongoing management. None of these plans materialised, with an anecdotal justification that the team's previous experience with the international consultancies was not particularly beneficial. In general, the reluctance to invest a national team effort into an international consultant is quite

common for the region; at the same time, the TE is aware of the instances where the value of such consultants has been confirmed by the implementing partners and the project teams themselves; those, however, are mostly related to the Climate Change and Energy Efficiency country portfolios. The TE's own experience and the observation of the project team's work during the last weeks of project performance justify (without questioning the team's professionalism) the recommendation to consider engaging outside help when the team's capacity is strained, be it a complicated case of an innovative patrolling system, the best practice for ecosystem restoration, or an exit strategy for the project that would be prepared in time, supported with comprehensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders, and would actually work.

2. Two changes were made to the project workplan for 2019-2020, according to the PSC meeting minutes (May 2019), as follows: First, the SC approved the procurement of hay for livestock for herders, in order to provide food for livestock in early spring; this would enable reducing the number of days of livestock grazing in the high-altitude pastures by 20 days, while the livestock would be fed on this forage and kept in temporary stands/landings, and, second, the SC approved the NBBC-born idea to procure portable gas cylinders for shepherds to reduce the forest cutting by shepherds for cooking.

These straightforward on-the-ground interventions targeted specific project areas and were aimed to demonstrate working solutions to the Pasture User Unions and individual farmers. The portable gas cylinders are refillable and have become a valuable asset locally; as to the procurement of hay, the sustainability of the endeavour can be questioned, however, the demonstration effect is clearly present, and the solution will be promoted and upscaled by the Pasture User Unions.

3. In December 2019, the project Steering Committee adopted a decision to increase the amount of grant financing directed towards communities within the framework of the project's Small Grants Programme (SGP) to US\$ 300,000. This has positively factored the record delivery rate for 2020 and responded to the project mid-term review recommendation. The SC acknowledged the SGP role in generating additional income for communities, provision of job opportunities, etc., through support to promoting eco-tourism, bee-keeping, and other interventions that do not deplete biodiversity, and thereby, reducing poverty and negative impacts on natural resources. SGP was also instrumental in raising public awareness and building relationships between local communities and local administrations for better management of natural resources. The project-born SGP was implemented in synergy with UNDP-GEF SGP and focused on the following objectives: a) development and implementation of activities aimed at mitigating and reducing pressures on pasture and forest ecosystems; b) demonstration of successful pasture management practices in project areas; c) reduction of "snow leopard-humans" conflict through income-generating interventions; d) demonstration of successful examples of mitigating risks to the environment, e) dissemination of traditional knowledge for restoration and conservation of ecosystems; and f) promotion of partnership at the local level. As suggested by UNDP, special attention was paid to women and vulnerable groups during the evaluation of SGP applications to ensure a balanced, fair and equitable geographical distribution of SGP funds. In May 2022, an additional US\$ 74,185 was reprogrammed for implementation of short-term cycle of project small grants before project completion.

The TE confirms the validity of the justification above and the value of the SGP component in general.

4. The PSC meeting of July 12, 2021 was convened to discuss the construction of a Snow Leopard Rehabilitation Center in Murgab district. The participants discussed the scope of work requested from the project versus the required budget of US\$ 100,000, and the necessity to re-programme the project budget in order to accommodate these costs. The GEF increment makes less than 1% of the total cost of the Center; the GEF funds are requested for the facilities directly providing for recovery of injured snow leopards. The construction of the Center contributes to better awareness and visibility of Snow Leopard conservation work and would allow for rehabilitation of injured animals.

The project allocated US \$ 100,000 for the construction of a veterinary outpatient center, the construction of a quarantine zone, procurement of necessary equipment for medical procedures in the veterinary outpatient center, training of PA Agency regional department personnel on rehabilitation measures and veterinary procedures, conducting a series of awareness workshops and training for employees of the Tajik NP (as the Center will be located within the premises of the National Park) and the local community of Murgab district, and publishing brochures, leaflets and booklets on rehabilitation methods and medical procedures. Control and monitoring of construction work, as well as further operation and maintenance of the Center facilities will be carried out by the regional Environmental Protection Department of GBAO and the PA Agency. The Center is planned to start receiving initial patients in 2023. The value of the GEF increment was acknowledged to the TE by the State Committee for Environmental Protection, the rehabilitation center's role for the enhanced visibility and awareness, as well as for the local people in the remote and underdeveloped area of Murgab was confirmed.

92. The feasibility (including the budget) of the above adaptive management measures was first pre-assessed by the project team and discussed by the project Steering Committee. The TE commends the project for using a standardised approach involving the transparent and inclusive decision-making mechanism (project Steering Committee) for introducing the changes and amendments to the original project strategy described above. However, the TE notes that there is no record of the original project strategy elements that have not been pursued in the course of project implementation. These are the following specific outputs/activities:

- support to the establishment and administration of the co-management structure (i.e. Park Management Committee) for the Jirgital and Tavildara sections of Tajik NP. This is an important co-management element for the GEF increment under Component 1; while the project did a lot to support community engagement from the areas within and adjacent to the PAs, no co-management mechanisms have been tested nor put in place. This is precisely a case where NBBC could have looked for relevant experience in the neighbouring countries; the TE would kindly like to refer the team to her home-country experience in establishment of PA Community Advisory Councils⁵; this may be of interest for the future PA capacity building projects.
- 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. While the project worked with jamoats and had their representatives engaged in the development and discussion of Pasture Management Plans, those have not been integrated into the existing territorial planning/development schemes. Understanding the difficulties associated with such integration, the NBBC team should perhaps be on the conservative side while assessing the opportunities and the risks associated with their upcoming GEF 7 project increment where it concerns SLM mainstreaming into territorial planning.
- review of the national and regional best practices in high-altitude grassland and forest rehabilitation/restoration.

93. In general, the project's engagement with the Forestry Agency did not prove instrumental for the following specific outputs identified in the project strategy but never pursued, which should be attributed either to the lack of domestic expertise available, or to the absence of demand for such work:

- Participative development, adoption and enforcement of management guidelines to mitigate the impacts of wood harvesting on priority high altitude forests;
- Development of science-based guidelines for the determination of the sanitary cutting requirements for priority high altitude forests;

⁵ https://wwf.ru/upload/iblock/9b2/public_councils_altai.pdf

- Demonstration 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; and
- Capacity building for the Forestry Agency to more equitably distribute the income from hunting, in conformance with the explicit requirements of the Law on Hunting⁶, to local communities and to protected areas (Output 1.4 and 2.3).

Stakeholder Participation and Partnership Arrangements

94. Throughout the project implementation, strong communication and cooperation links have been maintained at political level with the Committee for the Environmental Protection, the Government and the Parliament. The project results and findings are reported to the Committee for Environmental Protection and the Government on a weekly basis and included into plans and policies related to sustainable development, environmental protection, the programs of poverty reduction and enhancing food security of Tajikistan. The strategy of the project interventions has been focused on consistent enforcement and capacitating relevant stakeholders in terms of both training and technical support. The combined project approach towards strengthening capacities of different stakeholders at different levels (from communities and nature users to control authorities and decision-makers) contribute significantly to reducing the stress on snow leopard and prey habitats, and enhancing the level of knowledge about snow leopards and their ecosystems at the nation-wide level, that is important for changing attitude and behaviour of the population and reducing relevant conflict between the people and wildlife (snow leopards). In terms of cooperation with international stakeholders, namely the Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP), the project actively includes and converts for local perception the international resource materials, and includes them in local trainings to ensure better understanding of the trends and up-to-date methods/techniques for conservation and sustainable management of snow leopard ecosystems.

95. The TE confirms the project success in stakeholder engagement, strengthening partnerships and resource mobilization, including both with external actors and UNDP cross-cutting initiatives. Project co-financing exceeded the expectations at the project start. In addition to the initially programmed co-finance of main stakeholder and the contribution of existing partners, new partnerships were engaged that allowed to cover all project targeted areas with the interventions on capacitating local environmental staff and the communities, including women and girls. The cooperation with the related projects/programmes implemented by UNDP allowed expanding capacitating activities related to reducing snow leopard-human conflict and enhancing community livelihoods. One of bright examples of such cooperation became the collaboration with the SGP-GEF team on developing and harmonizing a concept for SGP-GEF special tranche of the OP6 SGP Innovation Programme, that allowed implementation of grants in additional areas.

Project Finance and Co-finance

96. The project budget is comprised of USD 4,181,370 GEF resources and USD 410,000 UNDP TRAC funds (UNDP cash co-financing for the project). The UNDP TRAC budget was increased to USD 440,000 following the project 12-months extension. The UNDP CO is praised for the timely adjustments of the TRAC allocation plans and absorption of project management costs that would have to be incurred as a result of the project extension. The TE also notes the re-phasing of PMC costs from GEF to TRAC funds in the GEF PMC budget, which was possibly done in response to the concerns of the project Mid-Term Review that there was a risk of exceeding the limit of GEF costs on Project Management (PMC); now the PMC share of the GEF expenditure

⁶ The Law on Hunting makes explicit provision for a portion of hunting income to be allocated to local communities for community-based development projects, and for a portion to be allocated to protected areas to supplement their income for operational costs.

does not exceed the acceptable limit; in fact, the GEF PMC costs are below 64% of the approved GEF PMC budget.

97. The budget delivery as of June 30, 2022, accounts for 97% of the approved project budget. Together with the committed funds (ongoing contracts and “exit plan” expenditures such as final SCM costs), the projected delivery is close to 100%. The TE believes that the remaining project balance of ca. USD 44,000 can cover the costs associated with the project exit and sustainability plan implementation.

98. The project spent some USD 400,000 above the prodoc budget on Component 2. The reallocation of additional funds to Component 1 was associated with the expansion of the project Small Grants Programme and the increment for the construction of the Snow Leopard Rehabilitation Center in Murgab. While these deviations from the original project plans had been endorsed by the Project Steering Committee, the total re-programming of funds did not exceed the 10% limit which would qualify it as a major adjustment.

99. The budget revisions follow the approval of project workplans; the project team generally adjusts the budget according to the approved workplan in the first quarter of the year. Project finance data are presented in [Annex 4](#) to the TE report.

100. The project financial management is considered to be adequate, responsive to the high standards of UNDP with a decades’ record of quality support to NIM in the country. The financial controls, including reporting and planning, follow UNDP standards and requirements. NIM audit issued no qualified opinion throughout the project implementation; the NIM audit observations concerned the programmatic aspects of project delivery (e.g. understaffing of the project team and related delivery risks) and did not relate to financial management and controls.

101. The co-financing reported by the Project Implementing Partner, confirmed in writing and verified by TE reaches 103% of the Prodoc commitment. The detailed information on co-financing is presented in [Annex 4](#) to the TE report. Most of the co-financing relates to parallel funding of relevant projects and activities reported by the project partners. Yet, it is traditionally being qualified as “in-kind” which automatically means “recurrent expenditure” while in fact most of it is “investment mobilised” since many of these parallel initiatives are not the baseline finance but materialise in response to the GEF increment aimed at a particular protected area, forestry area, pasture management unit or similar object of the GEF intervention. One typical example is the investment in construction and equipment of the snow leopard rehabilitation center in Murgab; the investment was not planned at the project start and materialised during the project implementation that had stimulated the increased awareness and prioritisation of the snow leopard conservation agenda.

Monitoring & Evaluation

102. The M&E approach responds to the UNDP-GEF standards as described in the Project Document. The M&E activities identified in the M&E Plan include inception workshop and report, annual progress reporting (APR/PIR), Project Board meetings, project tracking of Strategic Framework indicators at objective and outcome levels, the independent mid-term and terminal evaluations, project terminal report, audit, and monitoring visits from UNDP. The M&E plan seems practical and sufficient. A budget of USD 102,000 was allocated to M&E, representing about 2.4% of the GEF grant. As per the Inception Report, 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.

103. The following milestones were included in the M&E Plan for the project:

- 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. Several changes discussed 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 Log update in Atlas took part before the TE, with the TE team leading the exercise.
- **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 1st to June 30th for each year.
- **Periodic Monitoring through Site Visits:** UNDP Country Office has been conducting visits to project sites to assess first-hand 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) took place in 2019; final evaluation started three weeks prior to the operation closure of the project. The final PSC meeting is yet to take place. Because of the timing issue and also due to the understaffing issues within the project team, the TE work includes preparation of the terminal PIR and completion of the terminal tracking tools (METT) and the GEF Core Indicator Worksheet.
- **Project Terminal Report:** This comprehensive report is supposed 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. This report is not yet in place.

The project was also supposed to prepare an exit strategy and a sustainability plan and associated it with the "project exit budget", however, the draft document has not got to the stage or any external review or approval.

- **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. The TE criticises the Project Management for insufficient effort on analysing, collecting and documenting the knowledge, lessons learned and best practices, and recommends changing this practice for the future (please see the Recommendations section for detail).
- **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: NIM Audits have been conducted in accordance with UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules.

104. The TE would like to dedicate a specific space in this report to convey the NIM Implementing Partner's satisfaction with and gratitude for the level and quality of on-site monitoring ensured by the UNDP CO as part of their core project oversight functions. The TE joins NBBC in the highest rating of the quality of monitoring ensured by UNDP and encourages the CO to share, through either the final PIR for this project or the first PIR for the GEF-7 project, a typical field monitoring report as best practice for possible use by other offices. Indeed, it is a rare case when a routine function is carried out with such dedication and actually helps the project team in quality assurance where their own qualifications or a mere lack of time might constrain the exercise (e.g., when a Component Manager, a PhD in Biology, would be expected to assume an undivided responsibility for monitoring and acceptance of complex construction works). UNDP CO support and the deployment of field specialists for on-site monitoring of the specific investment objects in the remote areas of Tajikistan was invaluable and was ensured with high quality and efficiency. There was one anecdote which the TE can't keep from sharing, as the project team almost complained about the level of detail and attention to a particular spot-check element. UNDP assisted the project with procurement of donkeys for the PA rangers; a spot-check was organised some 6 months after the successful placement of the donkeys, and a monitoring specialist came to the National Park to check on the lovely four-legged assets; the spot-check report, although satisfactory, included a comment that one donkey was of the wrong shade of brown, which was not in compliance with its (the donkey's) passport, and that required an explanation from the project experts about donkeys growing and moulting. On a more serious side, with this level of resource and energy applied to UNDP on-site monitoring, and with the excellent capacities that UNDP builds and sustains there, the TE would kindly recommend that the project-based impact monitoring be planned and implemented in synergy with UNDP field monitoring, thus allowing for even higher efficiency of both. A UNDP specialist diligent enough to refer to the donkey colour scheme, would be no doubt willing to learn more about the case: whether the donkeys really helped with better patrolling coverage in the national park? How many hectares can one ranger cover on foot, and how many with the donkey? Is the donkey riding safely, are there any safety issues of which the rider should be aware? What would they do if the ranger faces a criminal situation and would need to act quickly? Is there a need for a regular veterinary service? Is the reserve capable of providing them with hay in winter and early spring? Are there any other costs and requirements for their maintenance, is the reserve capable of ensuring these requirements? Will they be able to justify their need for more donkeys if needed, without project funding? Or, will the donkeys produce offspring? In other words, a routine spot-check report could probably contain information that would be of use for the project as the evidence of project capacity building impact, and vice versa, monitoring reports from the project experts (as it happened during the TE field mission) can serve the purpose of on-site monitoring and verification for UNDP.

Project Implementation Arrangements

105. 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 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 according to UNDP rules and regulations. For this project, the provision of services was the object of a Letter of Agreement between the Government of Tajikistan, as 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 consultants, (ii) facilitation of local and international travel, (iii) procurement of goods and services over USD 50,000, and (iv) financial support services. For all other procurement processes – i.e., those below USD 50,000 - NBBC is fully accountable as the Implementing Partner. Furthermore, a delegation of authority makes 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. While the controls are with the Project Team and the Implementing Partner, the project operates on the Direct Payments modality, as UNDP ensures all project payments based on payment request/FACE forms with the supporting documents prepared by the Project Team and certified by the Project Manager. The TE notes that LOA does not stipulate the recruitment of project personnel among the support services from the UNDP CO, yet, the recruitment of the PMU staff was ensured by UNDP.

106. No negative feedback nor complaints have been received regarding the quality of UNDP Support Services or the overall feasibility of the Support to NIM modality. However, the Implementing Partner mentioned that the approval of project payments involving FACE forms takes at least two weeks to process, and involves several iterative approvals, while the Project Manager is required to approve the same payment twice (at FACE stage and at DMS stage). This certainly is something that has a corporate origin and is not easily changed even if highlighted by the TE as not the best practice. Such payment terms, however, are hardly acceptable for many of the project suppliers, while the overall complexity of payment processing is certainly a burden and a complication for the work of the project team and the Implementing Partner. It is understood that the IP is reluctant to test a system of NIM advances; however, for the cases when a short turnover of payment operations is required the NIM advance scheme might actually be an option.

107. According to the LOA between UNDP and the Implementing Partner, the procurement of goods and services and the recruitment of project personnel by the UNDP country office is ensured in accordance with the UNDP regulations, rules, policies and procedures. The administrative, financial and procurement transactions of the NIM implementing partner adhere to the national regulations and requirements and rules and procedures for UNDP project implemented according to the NIM modality. There was one particular procurement case where the IP specifically asked that the procurement process be run by UNDP even though the estimated contract amount was half the threshold of USD 50,000. The IP asked for UNDP support having in mind their lack of experience with procurement of complex construction work and services. The IP then hired an engineer who estimated costs and quantities of materials and labour; these estimations were verified by UNDP personnel involved in procurement of this construction work. This was seemingly sufficient to produce valid procurement specifications; however, regardless of the additional quality assurance measures, this procurement case turned out to be a complicated one and resulted in UNDP having to select a supplier three separate times and terminate the procurement contracts that were in force with the first two selections. As a result, the project lost a valuable field season. In the IP's opinion, the lack of flexibility in the procurement rules resulted in selection of a supplier based on the minimum price and not the best value for money criteria. The TE believes that the case illustrates the difficulties in working in remote and inaccessible areas of Tajikistan and the lack of fully qualifying work providers from whom to choose. This increased both the risk of price dumping and underperformance (which materialised in this particular case) and the risk of overpricing when no qualified alternative is available at all. It is anyway a case from which both the IP and UNDP will learn and must anticipate similar problems when working on other cases.

108. The TE believes that UNDP implementation and oversight were ensured in a satisfactory manner. UNDP has fully and adequately supported the project during implementation. The TE was surprised to learn how genuinely concerned the UNDP DRR in Tajikistan, Chris Politis, was with the project performance and how personally involved was in the project oversight. He made constant contributions to the work of the Project Steering Committee, promoted the project-born agenda in high-level governmental communications, and personally supported crisis decision-making that was required in response to project operational issues that were brought to his attention. His support and input are highly valued by the Implementing Partner. As one illustration, the DRR had to get personally involved in termination of one of the procurement contracts for construction mentioned above and managed to negotiate the case to the satisfaction of both the supplier and the contractor (NBBC), and in full accordance with the UNDP rules and procedures. This case, where a high-level UNDP official gets involved in a technical contract conflict, is remarkable in the region.

109. The project management arrangements are standard for the UNDP-GEF projects in Tajikistan and adhere to the principles and requirements set forth in the Project Document. Based on the previous experience, the management arrangements for the project were planned at the outset of the project and reflect the country-specific best practice for the decision-making and the day-to-day implementation of project activities. No changes to the project management arrangements have been made since the ProDoc signature. However, the composition of the project implementation team and the roles and responsibilities have changed significantly in the last 1.5 years of project implementation.

110. The Implementing Partner of the project is the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre (NBBC) of the Committee for Environmental Protection. The NBBC takes overall responsibility for coordinating, monitoring progress and reporting on the project activities. The NBBC has comprehensive engagement mechanisms both with district authorities and national ministries and agencies. At policy level, NBBC provides key technical inputs and data, policy recommendations and contributes to development of the overall development agenda (environment, biodiversity, forestry, land management) to the Committee for Environmental protection and other authorities as necessary. The NBBC demonstrates a decade-long track record of engagement of best available knowledge and expertise country-wise and brings in an invaluable asset of cooperation, positive experience and mutual trust with the principal institutional partners, local and regional authorities and local communities.

111. The Director of NBBC, Olimjon Yatimov is the Project National Director (NPD) and, as such, provides the strategic oversight and guidance to project implementation. He has been with NBBC since 2003 and oversees all its activities, reports directly to the Committee for Environmental Protection and liaises daily with the state ministries, the Academy of Science, local governments, thematic experts, and various project partners representing civil society, academia, and sectoral institutions. Since the project lost its technical leadership (the Project Manager and then the CTA), the National Director became de-facto responsible for all principal decision making, cooperation with the partners, reporting to the Committee for Environmental Protection, UNDP CO and UNDP-GEF; the NPD supplies the project team with extra hands and help from within NBBC and the outside expertise where required; he also acts as a resource person and the communication aid for UNDP and the Government, and sometimes has to work in a crisis management mode. His is an unpaid position covered by the NBBC in-kind contribution to the project.

112. At the project start, the Project Management Unit (PMU) was established for the project day-to-day administration, management and technical support as required by the needs of day-to-day operations of the project. NBBC provided the premises for the PMU as its in-kind contribution, together with the IT function, accounting/finance support, supplies, and administrative support. Per the Project Document, the unit should have been composed of a full-time Project Manager, a Project Administrative Assistant and a Project Financial Assistant. Field-based technical support and oversight should have been provided by three Field Coordinators, one for PAs (Component 1), one for pastures and forests (Component 2) and one for knowledge management (Component 3). The Project Document also proposed that an International Technical Adviser would render professional and technical support to the PMU, NBBC, and other government counterparts, by providing the required professional and technical inputs for project planning and reporting, reviewing and preparing Terms of Reference and reviewing the outputs of service providers, experts and other sub-contractors. As the project entered its active implementation phase, it was decided not to have an International Technical Adviser as noted above in the [Adaptive Management](#) section.

113. The technical leadership was ensured by Dr. Nematullo Safarov, who in 2020 had to retire from his position of Project Manager and was a part-time National CTA for the project until mid-2021⁷. At the project

⁷ Nematullo Makhmadulloevich Safarov, Doctor of Biology, a deputy minister of nature protection back in 1990s, a life-long programmatic leader of NBBC referred to by his colleagues as a teacher, a caring mentor and a father, passed away in August 2021 from complications caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

inception, he also assumed the technical leadership for the project Component 2, as it was decided not to hire a Field Coordinator there. Technically, he worked on this component together with Khisrav Shermatov, who later became the de-facto Task Leader for both Component 1 (protected areas) and Component 2 (pastures and forests). Dr.Safarov's unexpected passing during the COVID-19 pandemic created a notable challenge for the project and its team, which grew with the failure of finding a qualified replacement for the vacant posts with the PIU. Remaining team members had to pick up the slack and provide efforts over and above the expectations.

114. Tatiana Mikhailovna Novikova was the Task Leader for Component 3 and now combines the technical leadership for the activities under Outcome 3 with an unofficial role of a spokesperson/communication specialist and an official role of Project Manager a.i. with a delegation of authority for certification and approval of payments, staff performance assessment, certification of budgets and workplans, M&E, asset management, clearance of travel requests, e-procurement etc.; Khisrav Shermatov performs these functions in her absence. The Project Manager a.i. has been in charge for the management of project processes since July 2020. Actively supported by the Project National Director, she spared no effort in moving forward the strategic direction of the project set forth by its former technical leader, maintaining and expanding stakeholder engagement, providing opportunities for building capacities of the national partners and, most of all, maintaining the team spirit and encouraging and empowering, as much as she could, the two remaining team members, personally and professionally.

115. The third and last member of the current project team, Vladimir Lekarkin, was initially hired as a Project Administrative Assistant, and is now responsible for project administration, financial management, and reporting; he prepares budgets and budget revisions, procurement plans, recruitment and contract documents; he monitors contracts with suppliers, procurement of goods and services, implementation of training and educational activities; he is the team's liaison with the UNDP CO on a daily basis and is responsible for adherence of all project processes to UNDP rules and procedures; he ensures project reporting to the donor agencies and manages project records inputs in corporate on-line systems such as PIMS+, Atlas, and PIR online reporting. It is the TE's opinion that with this complexity and responsibility of his current role, his position should have been re-classified by the UNDP CO as Project Officer, applying adaptive management within the available GEF PMC budget (with savings associated with the vacant posts). Without this incentive, Mr. Lekarkin has only had his highest personal merit, self-imposed quality control, efficiency and integrity as driving forces for performing in accordance with the growing workload and high-quality standards maintained within the team. It is the TE's understanding that the team spirit promoted by the Project Manager a.i., the ultimate support from the Project National Director working shoulder-to-shoulder with the project team, professionalism and internal culture of professional communication and respect made it possible for the team and specifically for Mr. Lekarkin to keep delivering despite the immense workload and the change in the level of responsibility that was not reflected in a change of position for him, not granting of more authority, nor an increase in his salary or compensation for working overtime.

116. The same actually applies to Khisrav Shermatov, with a difference though that, for him, the change from being a mere "substantive support staff" was an opportunity to see how professionally and personally fulfilling this tough job becomes if one has nothing but his own professional qualities to present himself to project partners, be it the top-level decision-making officials or local level PA managers, pasture users and foresters. The TE was surprised to learn that Mr. Shermatov has only been performing these functions on his own for less than a year, since the level of respect towards him and the overall sense of "fitness for the job" which he emanated during the joint meetings with the project partners was very evident to the TE.

117. The reasons for the TE to dwell extensively on the project team performance comes from a valid comment in last year's PIR, from the UNDP-GEF RTA, as follows: "inadequate staffing capacity compromises the project's ability to implement the activities timely and cost-effectively. It also risks inappropriate accounting, recording, and preparation of the necessary supporting documentation due to overstretched

existing staff”. The TE looked at specific aspects of the project administration and daily management to see if these risks have materialised. The TE, though limited by the fact that the project has been operationally closed (and the team’s contracts closed too) a week after the TE mission, having discussed various aspects of project performance with the partners, having analysed the PIRs and the HACT audit reports and having performed endless interviews with the project team as we went through project performance indicators and evidence documents, found no aspect nor feature in the project performance where the performance quality or an output would have been questioned or compromised.

118. The statement above does not imply that the project was perfect in all aspects of its management, performance, monitoring, reporting, communication and delivery. It merely confirms that despite the understaffing and the 1-year extension, the project was implemented in an efficient and results-focused manner, with highly capable and professional staff and quality oversight by the National Director and UNDP. The project administration, reporting, and financial management were conducted in an appropriate manner, with no material deficiencies nor substantive weaknesses. The Project National Director, together with the team, maintained the NBBC’s legacy and the track-record of proficiency and reliability in the team’s daily work with the partners. The TE praises the team management and work ethics standards applied at the project Implementing Partner’s office and through their communication with the project stakeholders.

119. The project is overseen by the Steering Committee that functions in accordance with the ToR and the mandate foreseen at the project inception. The Steering Committee provides overall guidance and policy direction to the implementation of the project and provides advice on appropriate strategies for project sustainability. The Steering Committee is supposed to play a critical role in project monitoring and evaluation by quality assuring the project processes and products. It is also called to serve as grievance redress mechanism and shall arbitrate on any conflicts within the project or address the issues communicated by external partners and parties affected by the project work. The Steering Committee is composed of the main government entities, the Academy of Science and one NGO representative. The relevance of this mechanism for the project-level strategic oversight and guidance, synergy, coordination with relevant parallel initiatives, co-financing and synergy was confirmed by the principal project partners, including the Academy of Science and the Committee for Environmental Protection.

120. The Steering Committee met twice per annum, and there were also *ad hoc* meetings; altogether, during 2017-2022, ten Steering Committee meetings were held. The SC attendance record is presented as [Annex 7](#) to this report. The TE makes a note that the members of the Steering Committee included the Committee for Environmental Protection as the only governmental-sectoral body relevant to the project interventions, while, following the governmental reform of 2020 it would have been natural to invite the Forestry Agency to sit on the Steering Committee, especially taking into account the a) project plans for forestry that only partly materialised and b) the unresolved issue with the Sangvor refuge. For the GEF-7 project that is about to start, the Steering Committee will include the Forestry Agency and the Pasture-Meliorative Trust (under the Ministry of Agriculture), along with the Committee for Environmental Protection and the PA Agency (State Institution for PAs under the Committee for the Environmental Protection) so that all governmental bodies in charge of biodiversity conservation and sustainable pasture and forest management will be present there. Another comment from the TE comes from her home experience and relates to the fact that the SC rules and procedure should be amended to include a necessity to declare a conflict of interest in case a member of the Project Steering Committee becomes a direct recipient of the project resources. In such a case, for example, the NGO “Noosphera” should have been declared a conflict of interest and should have withdrawn from discussing a particular element of the project workplan where it would possibly act as a direct financial beneficiary/contractor. It is also recommended that the project considers engagement of more than one NGO in the work of the Project Steering Committee, on a rotational basis.

121. The project performance, its results and issues are being regularly discussed and monitored at the weekly meetings with the Head of the Committee for Environmental Protection of the Government of Tajikistan. The evidence from both the project Steering Committee meetings and the monitoring meetings of the Committee confirm that all principal decision makers have been, and are, aware of the project performance, its issues and needs. The fact that some of those needs remained unresolved should not be attributed to the lack of attention nor tools implemented by either UNDP, or the IP and the Committee for the Environmental Protection. It is particularly relevant to the PIU understaffing issue that was constantly flagged during the second half of the project implementation.

Risk Management

122. Project risks were identified at the project formulation stage and documented in the project document, which described four risk with the comprehensive risk mitigation measures. 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 six risks, which were documented in the inception report. The final version of the project risk log was updated by the TE as presented in [Annex 5](#).

Four risks were identified at the project formulation stage and documented in the project document, together with the comprehensive risk mitigation measures. The same four risks were assessed during the SESP screening at the project design stage. The TE notes that while the SESP risks are social and environmental risks associated with the implementation activities and which are stemming from project interventions, the project risks are those that hamper the implementation of project plans and achievement of its results and impacts. For this project design, somehow, the SESP risks and the project risks were formulated in a “broader” way that fits both the project-born risks and risks to the project success. While such formulation of the initial four risks in the project risk log makes it possible to qualify those as both SESP and project risks, this “broader formulation” approach allows for a less discreet approach to risk management, as the generic description of risks and their management responses remain valid through the project lifetime. While these initial four risks were reviewed during the inception phase and resulted in slightly updated mitigation measures, two additional risks, for a total of six risks, were added after the inception phase, and then a COVID-19 pandemic related risk was added in 2020. There were very few changes to either the description of the initial four risks or their management responses; the initial SESP was never revised, and the risk management responses remained as generic as they were at project start. There were requests from the UNDP-GEF RTA to pay more attention to ensure that the Atlas Risk Register is maintained and updated regularly, and the update of the Risk Log is formally in place, however, the generic nature of the risk and the management response description seems to be the reason for insufficient action and detail in the risk and mitigation measure record and update. The TE notes that the intention to “fit” all the emerging risks and outside factors that affected the project performance (such as the governmental reform and the switch of authorities between the Forestry Agency and the Committee for Environmental Protection) into the existing risk descriptions, and an overall shift from risk monitoring and adaptive response practice towards a mere (although valid) statement of risks and their status/manifestation does not seem to be the best risk management practice.

This is of special reference to Risk 1 which was initially rated “high” in SESP, then rated “Moderate” after the MTR, but still affecting the overall PIR risk rating for this project ('High', following the overall SESP rating). The risk has actually materialized as was confirmed during the project Terminal Evaluation. The risk, outside the SESP terminology, is categorized as “political” and states that the state institutions responsible for the administration of protected areas, pastures, and forests might not have adequate capacity, nor demonstrate the necessary political will, to support, maintain and enforce working agreements in support to project objective and outcomes. The mitigation measures were broadly described as (a) continued strengthening and expanding of the current capabilities of the key institutions responsible for the planning and management of

protected areas; (b) provision of assistance in building capacities for well-trained and adequately equipped management, monitoring, enforcement, community liaison and pastoral extension service staff in the targeted SPNAs, leskhoz, border control points, khukumats and jamoats; and (c) ensuring that planning and implementation of capacity development activities are done with due account for sustainability of support and effectiveness for long-term perspective. Described this way, the mitigation measures seem adequate, however, this broad description gives no information of what exactly happened and how the risk was mitigated. As confirmed after the TE, this has manifested itself negatively in several directions while impacting the project EoP target delivery, as follows:

1. The project work with the Sangvor refuge (IUCN category IV) was planned and implemented as a capacity-building increment to the effort of the Government to upgrade the status of the PA through its inclusion into the surrounding Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park. The Sangvor Refuge used to be subordinate to the PA Agency within the Agency for Forestry. After the governmental reform, the refuge remained under the Agency for Forestry while the PA Agency is now subordinate to the Committee for the Environment Protection. Before this change, the project prepared a package for transfer of the refuge. Such change should be agreed to between the Forestry Agency and the Committee for Environmental Protection and authorized by a Decree of the Government. The project facilitated a series of dedicated consultations and meetings with the local administration, the Forestry Agency, the PA Agency and the Committee for Environmental Protection. Yet, according to the project TE opinion, which is based on the meetings with the principal stakeholders above, the likelihood of the zakaznik's transfer under a different management authority (i.e., from the Forestry Agency to the PA Agency subordinate to the Committee for the Environment Protection) is low. The TE suggested a set of actions aimed to mollify the effect and ensure some sustainability to the capacity building effort extended to the refuge with an assumption that it will be upgraded as part of the National Park.

2. The project was designed to catalyse a better governmental investment into the PA estate. Yet, towards the end of the project, the increase in annual budget allocation for the management of protected areas is negligible and does not even come close to matching the high inflation rates in Tajikistan. This is clearly outside the scope of this project intervention or influence, however, this factor should be taken into account during the implementation of other PA-focused projects in the country, in order to avoid unrealistic expectations.

3. The project was supposed to report on the approved and implemented National Action Plan for snow leopard conservation. Though several actions within this plan have been actually implemented with the support from the project, the plan was not approved by the Government. The TE does not believe it to be a major shortcoming as the National Action Plan consists primarily of the baseline and donor-funded activities carried out by the principal stakeholders, and those activities are being implemented regardless of the status of the National Plan adoption. Yet, on the formal side, the political will to have the National Action Plan as one of the principle international obligations was not there at the time of this project completion.

These three separate aspects, where the project can not report the achievement of the desired effect, formally "fit" for the Risk 1 description. However, the three cases are different in the nature of the risks and root causes; not all of these are "the lack of political will" and some aspects of these risks could have been, in the TE's opinion, at least partially mitigated. The risks associated with these three outputs could have been considered separately, with separate and detailed management responses regularly modified as the risks began to materialize, and with a subsequent change of risk category and attention to the risk monitoring and management.

The end-of-project assessment of other risks is also available in the risk log updated during the Terminal Evaluation. The project has successfully implemented the initial mitigation strategy for the risk linked to possible low levels of compliance with environmental legislation in the country and a possible reluctance to adopt more sustainable natural resource use practices. The monitoring and enforcement capacities have been enhanced, while the sustainable grazing and forest use practices have been demonstrated and embedded in the regulations (Pasture Law, Management Plans for Pasture User Unions, Forest Management and restoration best practices disseminated through Participatory Forest Management Committees). KM and awareness activities have been implemented as planned. The PA statistics show very positive dynamics in the number of poaching and other illegal (encroachments for crops and grazing, wood harvesting) incidents recorded. The sustainable use practices and restoration options for the high-altitude pastures and forests have been successfully tested with the involvement of local communities and local administrations who are now both aware and equipped to go on with the models introduced by the project. The risk measures supported by the project made it possible to mitigate this risk, and there are both regulatory and institutional capacities to sustain the current trends. It is understood though, that the risk is still present and would be valid for the future projects, as it is impossible for a limited donor-funded intervention to reverse the widespread culture of impunity from environmental prosecution.

The project execution arrangements, and particularly the role of the Implementing Partner, became grounds for a mitigation action for the risk related to the lack of coordination and cooperation between project stakeholders. As confirmed by the TE, the project Implementing Partner (NCBB) and its key stakeholders spared no effort to establish the required level of engagement, ownership over project endeavours and to remain fully engaged through the institutional mechanisms supported by the project (such as Pasture User Unions (PUUs) and Participatory Forest Management) as the project support phases out.

One risk that emerged during the project implementation relates to the complexity of the SMART patrolling equipment and processing; the project anticipated that the post-project maintenance of the equipment and processes would be complicated. The original software was reprogrammed to adapt to the conditions of the country. The open source code for the software has been transferred to the project implementing partner, an option for creation of new modules was added, and the possibility for data input in Tajik is there. The system has been tested and is in operation. Indeed, not all options of the SMART patrolling system, as was confirmed by the TE, are currently in use by the PAs. However, the system does work to inform the management of the PAs, along with the PA Agency, and is integrated with the database of the Committee for the Environmental Protection. Its maintenance is ensured by the project Implementing Partner.

As to the other risks, the long-term climate change effects did not significantly affect the project performance and achievement of the EoP targets. The banking system difficulties did not affect the project performance. The COVID-19 risk materialised, however, the management response was sufficient to minimize the impact on the project performance. While the project “international” dimension (Outcome 3) suffered most and many of the plans did not materialize, overall, thanks to the outstanding effort of the project team and partners, the project has overcome the risk and delivered the majority of its outputs and declared impacts.

1.3 Project Results and Impacts

123. As the TE coincided with the final reporting for the GEF, the TE Assessment of progress towards results was based on the 2022 draft PIR as presented in [Annex 6](#). The TE reviewed the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix below. The TE assesses the achievement of outcomes against indicators by reporting on the level of progress for each objective and outcome indicator at the time of the TE and noting final achievements.

124. The TE also assesses the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. The information in Table 2 below, together with a summary of project achievements indicates whether : a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements

125. Table 2 uses the unified TE rating scale and the colour scheme, as follows:

6 = Highly Satisfactory (HS): target exceeded expectations with no or insignificant shortcomings that do not compromise the declared results and impact
5 = Satisfactory (S): target achieved as expected with no or minor shortcomings that do not compromise the declared results and impact
4 = Moderately Satisfactory (MS): target partially achieved; there are shortcomings that compromise or moderately reduce the impact and/or the value and/or sustainability of results
3 = Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): target partially achieved; there are serious shortcomings that compromise or significantly reduce the impact and/or the value and/or sustainability of results
2 = Unsatisfactory (U): target not achieved or achieved with major shortcomings compromising the value of results, reducing the impact and/or providing for limited sustainability
1 = Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): target not achieved, there are major shortcomings compromising the value of results, minimising the impact and/or providing for very limited sustainability
Unable to Assess (U/A): available information does not allow an assessment

Table 2. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	End of project target level	End-of-project level at 30 June 2022	Evidence, rating, comments
Objective: Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alai and Tien-Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable livelihoods				
1. Extent (ha) of protected areas under a secure, and effectively managed, monitoring and enforcement regime	0	>427,400ha	<p>The end-of-project indicator value is 435,513 ha which includes Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik National Park (306,613 ha and 69,900 ha respectively) and Sangvor zakaznik (59,000 ha).</p> <p>Through its lifetime, the project provided an essential increment towards a more secured regime and a better management, monitoring and enforcement capacities for all targeted PAs of the project, through the following key interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demarcation of protected area boundaries through installation of banners, pointers and boundary markers along the boundaries of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP and Sangvor Refuge to mark the PA areas and increase awareness of local communities. • Construction of check-points to ensure control at the national park entry points in Sangvor and Lasksh section of the Tajik National Park • Temporarily provision for 18 additional rangers in the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP • Provision of uniforms and toolkits for fieldwork • Development of wildlife monitoring concept, development of the smart patrolling system adapted to the conditions of Tajikistan for implementation in Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP. • Procurement of vehicles, equipment, and communications tools in order to enable the implementation of the smart patrol system for Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP. 	<p><i>Contributes to GEF Core Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness Evidence: METT, List of equipment, List of trainings</i></p> <p><i>Evidence:</i></p> <p><i>The improved PA management effectiveness is evidenced through the capacity management scorecard (METT); the scope of project intervention is also detailed in the List of Equipment procured to enhance PA technical capacities and the List of Training organized for the PA staff.</i></p> <p><i>Report of checkpoints' construction</i></p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancement of PA monitoring and enforcement capacities, enhancement of patrolling system through trainings. The staff of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP, Sangvor Refuge and the PA Agency (altogether 450 people including additionally hired rangers and community liaison officers), increased their knowledge and skills in implementing the smart patrolling system, wildlife monitoring, wildlife inventory and reporting through workshops and trainings offered by the project. 	
2. Extent (ha) of high altitude grasslands (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas under a regulated and sustainable management regime	<5,000 ha	>100,000 ha	<p>438,286 ha of high-altitude grasslands (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas are under a regulated and sustainable management regime, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10,030 hectares of pastures are under active rehabilitation and improved management; the project impact relates to capacity building, trainings and advisory support. 428,256 ha covered by sustainable pasture management plans under implementation by Pasture Users' Unions with an oversight from the Pasture Meliorative Trust. 	<p><i>Aligned with GEF6 Objective BD-4 Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes and seascapes and production sectors, Indicator 9.1 Production landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into their management</i></p> <p><i>GEF6 Objective LD-3 Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape, Indicator 3.2: Application of integrated natural resource management (INRM) practices in wider landscapes</i></p> <p><i>Contributes to GEF Core Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems</i></p>
3. Extent (ha) of high altitude forest (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas under a sustainable management regime	<2,000 ha	>15,000 ha	<p>15,050 ha of high-altitude forests (above 1,500m) in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas are under sustainable management regime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of 15,000 ha of high-altitude forests has been enhanced during the reporting period through strengthening technical capacity of forestry departments and 	<p><i>Aligned with GEF6 Objective BD-4 Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes and seascapes and production sectors, Indicator 9.1 Production landscapes and seascapes that</i></p>

			<p>engaging representatives of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) committees in the areas of Tojikobod, Sangvor, Shamsiddin Shohin, Muminibod, Darvaz and Vanj.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within SGP activities, 50 ha of forest ecosystems were restored and created in the project areas of snow leopard habitats. • Two demonstration sites on alternative energy sources have been established in the Sarikhosor Nature Park. Adoption of energy-saving technologies facilitated public awareness raising and reducing forest cutting on the area of 3,000 hectares, thus saving 2,000 cubic meters of forests annually. 	<p><i>integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into their management</i></p> <p><i>GEF6 Objective LD-3 Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape, Indicator 3.2: Application of integrated natural resource management (INRM) practices in wider landscapes</i></p> <p><i>GEF 6 Objective SFM-1 Maintained Forest Resources: Reduce the pressures on high conservation value forests by addressing the drivers of deforestation, Indicator 1: Area of high conservation value forest identified and maintained</i></p> <p><i>Contributes to GEF Core Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems</i></p>
<p>4. Number of primary snow leopard prey populations:</p> <p>Marco Polo Sheep (NT)</p> <p>Siberian Ibex (LC)</p> <p>Heptner's markhor (EN)</p>	<p>Marco Polo Sheep: ~1,125</p> <p>Siberian Ibex: ~4,190</p> <p>Heptner's markhor: ~1,018</p>	<p>Marco Polo Sheep: >1,400</p> <p>Siberian Ibex: >5,000</p> <p>Heptner's markhor: >1,400</p>	<p>The number of primary snow leopard prey populations is as follows:</p> <p>~ Marco Polo Sheep: 27,000 animals;</p> <p>~ Siberian Ibex (surveyed area within the Tajik NP in Pamir, same as the baseline area survey) 7,200 animals;</p> <p>~ Heptner's markhor 5,086 animals</p> <p>The inventory of Marco Polo Sheep and Siberian Ibex was carried out in the fall of 2021 by the project partner, the Institute of Zoology and Parasitology of the National Academy of Sciences together with the Committee for Environmental Protection and the Hunters' Association of Tajikistan. The inventory of Heptner's markhor was not carried out since</p>	<p><i>The drastic raise in numbers of ungulates is associated with the limited accuracy of the baseline data and increased capacities for census and inventory work supported by the project</i></p>

			February 2021, hence the data from the previous reporting period is presented. The inventory areas are same as at baseline (Khazratishokh and Darvaz ridges, settlements Khirmandjo and Andjirob of Shamsiddin Shohin district, and Darvaz).	
5. Total snow leopard population in Tajikistan	180-220	>220	<p>According to the Academy of Sciences in Tajikistan, the presence of 180 animals is 100% confirmed by either genetic tests or monitoring data from camera traps (as conveyed to the project Final Evaluation). This figure relates only to the areas covered with the camera traps. Estimations based on monitoring of ecosystems and evidence of snow leopard presence, visual surveillance etc. indicate the range of 280 to 300 individuals. Broader estimation that are based on the growth trends for snow leopard prey, the numbers are approaching 500.</p> <p>The indicator is reflective of the project impact in the following two directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installation of camera traps for snow leopard and prey monitoring, in order to enhance data coverage and ensure reliable data updates on snow leopard presence in Tajikistan. Cumulatively from project start, the project supported installation of 112 camera traps covering the total area of 362673 ha in Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP, Sarikhosor Nature Park, Zorkul Reserve, and also in habitat areas in Khorog and Murghab. - Enhanced PA species protection and monitoring capacities and improved data on ungulate census. 	<i>Evidence: camera traps installation report</i>
6. 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	NA	<p>Involvement: >2000 (>60%)</p> <p>Direct benefits: >450 (>60%)</p>	Cumulatively since the project start 18,000 individuals (4,000 of them women or 20%) were covered by project interventions related to conservation and sustainable use of snow leopard and prey ecosystems. The project achieved the EoP target of >2000 individuals. Even though a proportion of women of the total is below the envisaged target of 60% in numeric values it exceeds 60% or 1,200 women of 2,000 individuals.	

<p>prey and snow leopard habitats</p> <p>[Revised indicator as per the Inception report dd 13.02.2017]</p> <p>[Original indicator]: 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</p>			<p>4,000 people (of which 100 women) were involved in trainings, workshops and consultations on smart patrolling, public monitoring and protection of snow leopard ecosystems and project activities on conservation and sustainable use of snow leopard ecosystems.</p> <p>More than 600 people (80 of them women), including 18 rangers, 2 community liaison experts received financial benefits by being engaged in the protection and patrolling, and enjoyed preferences in collecting forest resources, firewood, medicinal herbs, practicing bee-keeping, and using pastures under favorable conditions.</p> <p>The project relevant investments and associated direct benefits included grant support on rehabilitation of pastures and forests, beekeeping, construction of corrals, facilitation of favorable terms for collecting biodiversity products by the people living around targeted PAs.</p>	
Outcome 1: Conservation and sustainable management of key biodiversity areas				
<p>7.Total extent (ha) of IUCN Category I and Category II protected areas</p>	2,777,018 ha	2,837,018 ha	<p>The project reports no change from the baseline indicator level with the following explanation.</p> <p>The justification documents for upgrading the status of Sangvor zakaznik through its inclusion into the Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park have been prepared and submitted to the Committee for Environment Protection for confirmation/formalization of the status of this area. Such change should be agreed between the Forestry Agency and the Committee for Environmental Protection and authorized by a Decree of the Government. The project facilitated a series of dedicated consultations and meetings with the local administration, the Forestry Agency, the PA Agency and the Committee for Environmental Protection. Yet, according to the project Final Evaluation opinion which is based on the meetings with the principal stakeholders above, the likelihood of the zakaznik's transfer under a different management authority (i.e. from the Forestry Agency to the PA Agency</p>	

			<p>subordinate to the Committee for the Environment Protection) is low.</p> <p>The project provided for improved management capacities in Sangvor zakaznik through training, provision of transport (motorcycles, horses, donkeys), equipment, infrastructure, demarcation of boundaries and implementing the smart patrol system. The Management Capacity Scorecard for the zakaznik shows the score of 46, which is lower than the score of the National Park. The management deficiencies of the zakaznik (in comparison to the National Park) are associated with the limited staff, finance, monitoring and enforcement capacities. Forest refuge (zakaznik) mostly deals with sustainable use of forest and grassland resources and NTFP, while National Park has protection, patrolling, monitoring and enforcement as the primary objectives.</p> <p>In order to provide options for better protection, patrolling, monitoring and enforcement within the Sangvor forest refuge, the project Final Evaluation recommended a cooperation agreement between the Forestry Agency (on behalf of zakzanik) and the National Park as a mechanism.</p>	
8. Total annual budget (US\$/annum) allocation for the management of IUCN Category I – IV protected areas	US\$250,000/annum	>US\$450,000/annum	<p>Total annual funding allocation in 2022 for all categories of protected areas (I-IV) amounted to TJS 3,600,000 or approx. US\$ 346,154 (note: the exchange rate is 10.40). There is an increase (of TJS 100,000) in comparison to the previous year. This increase, if applied to the individual PAs (below), is negligible and does not even come close to matching the high inflation rates in Tajikistan.</p>	<p><i>The baseline annual budget figure covers the entire national PA system (cat. I-IV) which is not accurate as only the PAs with the planned impact from the project were meant to be considered.</i></p> <p><i>Therefore, both the baseline and the target are not strictly reflective of the project impact. The end-of-project indicator value of USD 346,154 reflects the entire national PA system (cat. I-IV) for comparison with the baseline.</i></p> <p><i>To indicate the increase in annual finance for the PAs directly supported with the project, we compare the 1st year data (2018)</i></p>

				<p><i>with the current data (2022), as follows:</i></p> <p><i>Lakhsh section of Tajik National Park TJS 150,000 (2022) versus 120,000 (2018)</i></p> <p><i>Sangvor section of Tajik National Park TJS 179,815 (2022) versus 147,830 (2018)</i></p> <p><i>Sangvor refuge TJS 48,400 (2022) versus 43,433 (2018)</i></p>
<p>9. METT scores for:</p> <p>Tajik NP (Jirgital section)</p> <p>Tajik NP (Tavildara section, including Sangvor)</p>	<p>Jirgital: 20</p> <p>Tavildara: 20</p>	<p>Jirgital: 44</p> <p>Tavildara: 40</p>	<p>Current METT scores for target PAs:</p> <p>Lakhsh (Jirgital) section of Tajik NP: 53</p> <p>Sangvor (Tavildara) section of Tajik NP: 57</p> <p>Sangvor Refuge: 46</p> <p>The significant increase in METT scores is first of all attributed to the innovative SMART anti-poaching patrolling and monitoring system has been developed by the international company NextGIS LLC using the latest actual technologies in spatial patrolling and monitoring, that is of utmost importance for the mountainous areas of Tajikistan, the specifics of geographical location and hard accessibility of project sites, and effective implementation and dissemination of patrolling practices after the project ends. NextGIS conducted trainings for the PA staff on the adoption and use of the SMART patrolling system.</p> <p>The boundaries of remote Sangvor and Lakhsh protected areas have been actually marked on site, that contributed – both administratively and institutionally – to the inclusion of these two PAs in the unified PA system. To designate the protected area boundaries 30 banners, signs, billboards have been installed along the borders of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of the Tajik NP. Along with that, the demarcation</p>	<p><i>METT for Sangvor Refuge (46) was assessed separately from the Sangvor section of the National Park and should be treated as the baseline METT score for the PA.</i></p>

			<p>activities facilitated raising awareness among local communities as well as attracting tourists.</p> <p>Employees of the State Institution for Specially Protected Natural Areas, Sangvor and Lakhsh branches of the Tajik NP were provided with communication and digital equipment to ensure proper protection and management of protected areas in the field conditions. Along with that, to implement the Mid-Term Review recommendation, in 2021 the project increased the volume of procured uniforms and field kits to cover more rangers and environmental staff engaged in wildlife protection and ensure effective patrolling. Based on the assessment, special uniforms and field equipment have been selected for routing field works. For four years, the project continued to cover 50% of the rangers' salary fund in the targeted areas of the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP.</p> <p>Through its awareness-raising interventions, in the settlements adjacent to the targeted PAs, the project facilitated consent between the administration of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP and the local communities on benefitting from preferences in collecting forest and pasture products, medicinal plants and beekeeping in return of the communities' participation in PA protection and management.</p> <p>Thus, thanks to introducing the innovative smart patrol system, strengthening technical and human capacities in the targeted PAs and engaging surrounding communities in the PA management and protection, the area of the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of the Tajik National Park has been covered by comprehensive wildlife monitoring. Along with that, enforcement capacities have been strengthened as well, evidenced by the increased number of stopped attempts of illegal hunting in wildlife and incidents of forest cutting in the PAs.</p>	
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10. Number of active patrol rangers in the Jirgital and Tavildara (including Sangvor) sections of Tajik NP	Jirgital: 10 Tavildara: 8	Jirgital: 18 Tavildara: 16	Jirgital (Lakhsh): 10 baseline + 10 supported by the project for 4 years -10 left after project completion = 10 Tavildara (Sangvor): 8 baseline +8 supported by the project for 4 years - 5 left after project completion = 11	<p><i>Note 1: “active” rangers are those who are on long-term contracts with the Park (full-time year-round employed)</i></p> <p><i>Note 2: Salaries were paid 50/50 by the project and the PA</i></p> <p><i>Note 3: In the Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park, three rangers supported by the project will continue working as PA staff after the project’s closure, five were employed by the local forestry division. In the Lakhsh section, unfortunately, all rangers hired by the project left in the last year of project implementation (due to significant salary decrease).</i></p>
11. Extent (as a percentage of the total area) of Jirgital and Tavildara (including Sangvor) sections of Tajik NP under a secure and effective monitoring and enforcement regime	Jirgital: <15% Tavildara: <12%	Jirgital: >85% Tavildara: >60%	<p>The patrolling coverage by each ranger reaches 20,000 hectares of the protected area. Totally, ranger patrols cover 250,000 ha of Sangvor section and 50,000 ha of Lakhsh section of Tajik NP.</p> <p>As such, the estimated coverage of PA areas under a secure and effective monitoring and enforcement regime is 71.5% for Lakhsh (Jirgital), and 65% for Sangvor (Tavildara) sections of Tajik NP.</p> <p>The checkpoints built at the entrance points of the Sangvor Section of Tajik NP continue contributing to improved control and monitoring, and reduced illegal activities in the protected area.</p> <p>Staff members of the State Institution for Specially Protected Natural Areas and community rangers in the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik National Park have been equipped with necessary field equipment (uniforms), communication devices (phones, radio sets, tablets, GPS) and transport that</p>	<p><i>The end-of-project value of this indicator for Sangvor (Tavildara) section of the Tajik National Park is exceeded, while for Lakhsh (Jirgital) section the end-of-project value is slightly below the target. The TE notes that the target level for Lakhsh section was too optimistic, taking into account the remote areas with very limited access, close to the country border. Approx. 30% of Lakhsh (Jurijital) territory is inaccessible due to a)permanent glacial coverage and b)cross-border insecurity. This was not taken into account when the target indicator value for Jurigital (>85%) was identified.</i></p>

			<p>contributed to effectiveness of PA monitoring and patrolling activities.</p> <p>Workshops and trainings on wildlife monitoring and inventory, principles of smart patrolling, use of camera traps for detecting wildlife, including snow leopards, and interpretation of data for proper reporting were offered to PA staff and community rangers in the sections of Tajik National Park in Sangvor, Lakhsh and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, Sarikhosor Nature Park, Dashtijum and Karatag zakazniks.</p> <p>Rangers and community liaison officers improved their skills through online training conducted by the International Consultant and the developer, the NextGIS company, on smart patrol system, methods of wildlife inventory and installation of camera traps for identification of animals in Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP.</p>	
<p>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 Jirgital and Tavildara sections of Tajik NP</p>	<p>(i) >15 (1)/annum (ii) >45 (2)/annum</p>	<p>(i) <5 (4) /annum (ii) <60 (40) /annum</p>	<p>(i) During the last reporting period for the project, 1 attempt of illegal hunting of wild animals and (ii) 2 incidents of forest cutting in Sangvor Section of Tajik NP, Dashtijum zakaznik and Khovaling district were stopped. Violators were detained, protocols issued and penalty for illegal hunting imposed (fines) issued.</p> <p>Protected area staff and public patrol rangers have been equipped with communication devices (radio sets, phones, satellite phones, GPS devices). The combination of all these measures helped to improve protection capacities and timely detection and prevention of illegal hunting/poaching in protected areas, resulting in the overall decreasing number in poaching and other illegal incidents.</p> <p>Project community liaison experts, jointly with administration of Sangvor and Lakhsh section of Tajik NP and local communities, conducted workshops and meetings devoted to the methods of detection of illegal hunting, elimination of poaching factors, participation in monitoring and protection of protected areas. Local communities are actively involved in the protection of snow leopard ecosystems around protected areas and help the administration of Sangvor and Lakhsh</p>	

			sections of Tajik National Park to timely identify illegal activities on the territory of the PAs.	
13. Number of individuals from targeted villages directly involved in (proportion of women), and financially benefiting from (proportion of women), the management of the Jirgital and Tavildara sections of Tajik NP	<p>Involvement in:</p> <p><100 (<15)</p> <p>Direct financial beneficiation from:</p> <p><10 (1-2)</p>	<p>Involvement in:</p> <p>>2000 (>1100)</p> <p>Direct financial beneficiation from:</p> <p>>150 (>80)</p>	<p>Cumulatively, since the project start 3,100 individuals (of them 325 women) from targeted villages have been directly involved in the activities aimed at enhancing management of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP.</p> <p>Community representatives from targeted villages are directly involved and financially benefitting from being involved in managing Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP (enjoying privileges in collecting forest resources, firewood, medicinal herbs, beekeeping, livestock-raising and using pastures under favorable conditions), as well as from job opportunities (18 rangers, 2 community liaison experts).</p> <p>51 workshops and trainings on protection and monitoring of snow leopard ecosystems and snow leopard prey were conducted by project partners, capacitating 1,283 people, including 121 women.</p> <p>Community liaison experts organized meetings and discussions with jamoats, administration of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP, local communities, schoolchildren and the youth, living around the PAs on the importance of conservation of snow leopard ecosystems and participation in PA protection and management.</p> <p>Agreements reached between the administration of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP and the local communities living around these PAs on benefitting from preferences in collecting forest and pasture products, medicinal plants and beekeeping in return of participation in PA protection and management. Based on the agreement between the PA administration and local communities the harvested forest products (nuts, almonds, fruits), medicinal herbs are distributed on the 50/50 principle between the local residents and PA administration, allowing the communities to receive income from the sale of products and thus improve their welfare.</p>	

Outcome 2: Ecosystem resilience and habitat connectivity in wider landscape outside protected areas				
14. Number of days of use of high altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas: Spring and autumn Summer	Spring/Autumn: 85-90 days Summer: 90-100 days	Spring/Autumn: 45-55 days Summer: 60-70 days	<p>The number of days of use of high-altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas decreased for 15-20 days and makes 45-50 days in spring and autumn, and 60-70 days in summertime.</p> <p>Procurement of hay for livestock was a demonstration of an effective method for reduction of the number of days of livestock grazing in the pastures located in key snow leopard habitats by 20 days, as it would enable the livestock to be fed on this forage and kept in temporary stands/landings. This will allow for reduced periods of grazing in summer pastures and prevent overgrazing and land degradation.</p> <p>The project raised awareness of livestock holders regarding their benefits from a delayed spring transhumance.</p> <p>The project developed methodological recommendations on the methods of reducing the number of days of grazing and restoration of high-altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas, and conducted consultations and trainings for all the relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>The project-born recommendations for decreasing the number of days of use of high-altitude pastures and other techniques to reduce their degradation were embedded as approved amendments to the Law on Pastures.</p>	
15. Productivity (tons/ha) of the high altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas [Revised indicator as per the Inception report dd 13.02.2017] [Original indicator]: Productivity (dry fodder mass in tons/ha) of the high altitude pastures in	<0.3 t/ha	>1 t/ha	<p>The productivity of pastures in key territories of Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas varies from 2,5 to 3 t/ha of dry mass and 4,5 t/ha of green mass (up to 5,5 t/ha of green mass in several key areas). These are average productivity values. The indicators in different years and in different areas are affected by seasonal and climatic conditions and altitude.</p> <p>The main contribution to the achievement of this indicator is related to the project's work to stimulate late livestock transfer in spring-autumn period.</p> <p>Methodological guidelines on restoration and rehabilitation of degraded pastures developed by project experts as well as</p>	<p><i>Evidence: Monitoring of implemented activities on assessing the effectiveness and productivity of high-altitude pastures, determining the capacity of pasture ecosystems in the project territories of Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas</i></p>

the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas			the training course for Pasture User Unions, contributed to improving pasture and livestock management on high-altitude pastures of Sh. Shokhin, Sangvor, Muminabad and Rasht districts.	
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	<30%	>50%	According to project experts, 45-60% of palatable and edible species grow in the high-altitude pastures of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas. The percentage of palatable and edible species was assessed through field expeditions to the key territories of Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz.	
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	0	>10	<p>Altogether 10 Pasture User Unions for 10 management plans for pilot high-altitude pastures were developed by the project experts together with the Pasture User Unions. The management plans are being implemented by the direct beneficiaries / farmers in the highland pastures of Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas.</p> <p>Four Pasture User Unions are implementing these management plans at the pilot pastures covering 428,256 ha, as confirmed by the monitoring data of the project pasture management expert.</p> <p>Pasture Ameliorative Trust oversees the implementation of the management plans; the project expert on pastures has been performing monthly monitoring since 2018.</p> <p>Management plans were accompanied by cartographic materials for livestock movement to high-altitude pastures of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas.</p> <p>The recommendations of the project experts for the Pasture user Unions to develop high-altitude pasture management plans have been included as part of amendments and additions have been introduced to the Law on Pastures.</p>	
18. Number of households in the Hissar-Alay and	NA		Cumulatively, since the project start the project supported 34 projects through the small grants program with a total of	

<p>Vakhsh-Darvaz areas directly benefiting from project technical and grant funding support for:</p> <p>(a) implementation of sustainable pasture management practices;</p> <p>(b) adoption of alternative fuel and energy technologies; and</p> <p>(c) community ranger pilot project</p>		<p>Sustainable pasture management: >40</p> <p>Fuel and energy technologies: >10</p> <p>Community ranger: 5</p>	<p>benefiting directly to 3,284 men and 2,124 women (2,078 households), as well indirectly to 20,091 men and 17,463 women (8,141 households), segregated by thematic activities as follows:</p> <p>a) sustainable pasture management and construction of corrals: 20 projects benefitting 2,122 households (511 directly and 1,611 indirectly).</p> <p>b) adoption of fuel and alternative energy technologies: 2 projects benefitting 4,532 households (133 directly and 4,399 indirectly).</p> <p>c) community ranger pilot project: 1 project benefitting 97 households (64 directly and 33 indirectly).</p> <p>d) development of beekeeping: 7 projects benefitting 2,110 households (782 directly and 1,328 indirectly).</p> <p>e) snow leopard protection activities: 1 project benefitting 600 households (250 directly and 350 indirectly).</p> <p>f) restoration of forest ecosystems: 3 projects benefitting 758 households (338 directly and 420 indirectly).</p>	
<p>19. Extent (ha) of degraded high altitude pastures and forests of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas under active rehabilitation or restoration</p>	<p>Pastures: 0 ha</p> <p>Forests: <100 ha</p>	<p>Pastures: 10,000 ha</p> <p>Forests: 6,000 ha</p>	<p>High-altitude pastures under restoration/rehabilitation:</p> <p>Cumulatively, since the project start and until 30 June 2022, 10,030 ha of high-altitude pastures in Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas have been rehabilitated or restored and are used in a sustainable manner (Shahristan, Ayni, Rasht, Tojikobod, Lakhsh, Sangvor, Muminobod, Khovaling and Shamsiddin Shokhin districts).</p> <p>The project has directly invested in rehabilitation of 10,000 of high-altitude pastures via procurement of seeds and tools for the Pasture User Unions. Along with that, under project small grants 30 ha of high-altitude pastures were restored by public organizations, dehkan farms in Shamsiddin Shohin, Tojikobod, Darvaz, Muminobod and Sangvor districts.</p>	<p><i>Aligned with GEF6 Objective SFM-3 Restored Forest Ecosystems: Reverse the loss of ecosystem services within degraded forest landscapes, Indicator 5: Area of forest resources restored in the landscape, stratified by forest management actors</i></p> <p><i>Project experts carry out rehabilitation effect monitoring according to a customized methodology.</i></p>

			<p>High-altitude forests under restoration/rehabilitation:</p> <p>Cumulative progress since the project start and until 30 June 2022 in restoration/rehabilitation of high-altitude forests in Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz makes 6,050 ha. Direct restoration area is 6,000 ha.</p> <p>Along with that, under project small grants 50 ha of high-altitude forests were restored by public organizations, dehqan farms and households in Shamsiddin Shohin, Tojikobod, Darvaz, Muminobod and Sangvor districts.</p>	
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	0	>3	<p>Three (3) Participatory Forest Management committees are actively involved in the planning, management and monitoring of high-altitude forests of the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas.</p> <p>During the reporting period Participatory Forest Management committees' representatives actively participated in the implementation of project activities. More than 30 people, including 10 women, participated in 3 project workshops devoted to improvement of forest management and restoration of degraded forests.</p> <p>Methodological recommendations for implementation of biotechnical measures and methods of combating forest pests were developed by project experts and handed over to representatives of the Participatory Forest Management committees in Shamsiddin Shohin, Darvaz and Rasht.</p>	
21. Number (per annum) of individuals involved in wildlife monitoring and enforcement training and skills development programmes	5-7/annum	>100/annum	<p>During 2021-2022, 230 individuals (of them 50 women) cumulatively were involved in wildlife monitoring and enforcement training and skills development programmes.</p> <p>During the reporting period (1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022) the below progress was gained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building and knowledge sharing for effective conservation of snow leopard ecosystems, held in Dushanbe with participation of 30 people. 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working meeting with employees and rangers of the Iskanderkul Nature Reserve (zakaznik) in the Ayni district with involvement of 20 people. Workshop on the coordination of the "Action Plan for the conservation of the snow leopard and its ecosystems in Tajikistan", city of Khujand, 25 attendees. Round table on The Role of the Red Book of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Protection of Biodiversity and Rational Use of Natural Resources, city of Dushanbe. Was attended by 39 people, including 4 women. Interdepartmental national workshop "Action Plan for the conservation of Snow Leopard ecosystems in Tajikistan", with participation of 31 people of which 2 women. <p>Also, 85 individuals (of them 25 women) were involved in wildlife monitoring and enforcement training and skills development programmes prepared and conducted by project partners in Dushanbe, Khujand and Kulyab.</p>	
Outcome 3: Support to international cooperation				
<p>22. Establishment and maintenance of a:</p> <p>(i) national snow leopard Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system</p> <p>(ii) national snow leopard Information Management (IM) system</p>	<p>M&R: No</p> <p>IM: No</p>	<p>M&R: Yes</p> <p>IM: Yes</p>	<p>The project has provided all enabling environment elements for the establishment and maintenance of M&R and IM systems.</p> <p>All necessary documents have been developed, including methodologies, guidelines and procedures for monitoring and evaluation. Necessary equipment, including camera traps, have been procured, provided and used in practice during trainings and workshops on monitoring across all project areas. The methodologies and guidelines were tested during actual monitoring works that were carried out by the partners (National Academy of Sciences, Committee for Environmental Protection, National Parks, Association of Hunters and other partners).</p> <p>During the Final Evaluation mission, the project partners, including the National Academy of Science, confirmed that</p>	

			the M&E and IM systems are functional and will be maintained by the National Academy of Science and the State Committee for Environmental Protection.	
23. National coverage (as a % of the total snow leopard range) of snow leopard and prey monitoring activities	Snow leopard: <10% Prey: <5%	Snow leopard: >25% Prey: >20%	<p>The project reports the achievement of the target indicator value (same as the previous year): the national coverage of snow leopard and prey monitoring activities makes 25% of snow leopard range and 20% for prey.</p> <p>The project National Implementing Partner concluded cooperation agreements for implementing the snow leopard and prey monitoring activities with the National Academy of Sciences, Hunters' Association of Tajikistan, Sangvor section of Tajik National Park, Institute of Zoology.</p> <p>The project has provided funds for the camera traps installation and incremental financing (proportional to the co-financing from the above partners) for monitoring and reporting.</p> <p>The agreements cover the areas in Murgab, Darvaz, Zorkul, Sangvor and Lakhsh districts identified during the project development phase, thus ensuring the expansion of the monitoring coverage of snow leopard habitats as planned at the project onset.</p> <p>During the project Final Evaluation, the partners confirmed their intention and capacity to implement monitoring activities covering the reported areas at their own expense.</p>	<p><i>Evidence: Cooperation Agreements concluded</i></p> <p><i>Map of camera traps' coverage</i></p>
24. Approved and implemented National Action Plan for snow leopard conservation.	No	Yes	<p>Draft National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation was approved in July 2021 through the series of final consultations led by the Academy of Sciences.</p> <p>Individual programs of the NAP are being tested and implemented with the project support by the National Academy of Sciences, its subordinate institutes and other project partners (including Committee for Environmental Protection). The programs under implementation address partners' capacitation in using innovative technologies, reducing the risk of poaching, and developing programs for research and monitoring of wild ungulates and snow</p>	<p><i>National Action Plan remains a draft document</i></p> <p><i>Four programs within the draft National Action Plan are being currently implemented by the project partners, as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Surveys using the photo traps</i> - <i>Ungulate research</i>

			<p>leopards. The results of pilot actions implementation have been incorporated into the final draft of the National Action Plan. Based on interagency review, the NAP will be approved by responsible executive agencies in accordance with existing rules for approval of such documents. As initially identified, the key executive agencies will be the National Academy of Sciences and National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Social Surveys</i> - <i>Distribution reviews</i> <p><i>Surveys using the camera traps program - is designed to provide participants with the knowledge and tools to plan and conduct a thorough survey using camera traps to estimate the number / density of the snow leopard population.</i></p> <p><i>Ungulate research program - it is aimed at the exchange of the latest methods and best practices of the survey of wild ungulates in the habitats of the snow leopard.</i></p> <p><i>Social Surveys - This program is aimed at sharing best practices related to the collection of social data. It will provide a brief overview of qualitative methods of answering social science questions.</i></p> <p><i>SMART approaches for conservation and survey - This module is dedicated to introducing participants to SMART approaches; a spatial monitoring and reporting tool developed by WCS and partners.</i></p>
25. Number of managers, scientists, researchers and academics participating in:	2	15	The project ensured participation of stakeholders in the following directions:	

<p>(i) regional snow leopard and prey conservation initiatives; and</p> <p>(ii) regional monitoring and report-back meetings</p>	0	10	<p>(i) 85 managers, scientists, researchers and academics participated in regional snow leopard and prey conservation initiatives.</p> <p>(ii) 50 managers, scientists, researchers and academics participated in regional monitoring and report-back meetings.</p> <p>The following events were specifically supported through the project implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee meetings of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme Experience exchange meeting of projects of Central Asian countries (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, scientists from Kazakhstan, WWF Russia) <p>(ii) regional monitoring and report-back meetings on specific topics, such as gender, climate change and climate adaptation, wildlife monitoring etc.</p>	
<p>26. Number of meetings per annum of National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee</p> <p>[Revised indicator as per the Inception report dd 13.02.2017]</p> <p>[Original indicator]: Number of meetings per annum of the:</p> <p>(i) National Environment Security Task Force (NEST)</p> <p>(ii) National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee</p>	0	<p>[Revised target]</p> <p>2</p> <p>[Original targets]</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p>	<p>The National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee was established with the project support as a permanent advisory body that reviews the implementation of state policy for conservation of snow leopard, its prey, ecosystem and related BD conservation and SLM issues.</p> <p>During the reporting period the project supported one (1) meeting of the National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee as well as several engagements of the National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee in the allied events as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On May 05, 2022, the National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee meeting was held in Khujand, addressing results of snow leopard conservation in Tajikistan; implementation of the GEF project strategy in Tajikistan and evaluation of the achieved GEF indicators. The discussions were concentrated around the proposals for harmonizing project activities with the state policy programs for protection and use of wildlife, with the account of project goals and 	

			<p>objectives. Along with that the mechanisms were reviewed, aimed at implementation of joint measures for achieving project objectives in conservation and sustainable use of high-altitude ecosystems within snow leopard and prey habitats.</p> <p>a) Workshop in support of the GSLEP Steering Committee – 2021 in Dushanbe on 22 October 2021, addressing exchange of experiences and lessons learned in snow leopard conservation, updating country profiles in the GSLEP website and the update on the implementation of PAWS. During the workshop, Tajikistan presented a report on the status of developing the National Action Plan and the progress of its design, with the account of new global initiatives and strategic approaches. Tajikistan's methodological guide was also presented.</p> <p>b) Workshop in support to international event “On the road to Kunming - Spotlight on Central Asia’s Biodiversity Conservation” in Dushanbe in November 2021, addressing scientific and technical analysis of goals and objectives with a glance to a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Outlook. The framework of new international principles of the CBD’s concept "Preserving Life on Earth" has been adopted as the basis for the update of NAP structure, that was supported by the participants of the meeting.</p> <p>c) Workshop “Snow Leopard Conservation in Tajikistan: Main Achievements and Future Activities" on 18 January 2022 in Dushanbe, addressing project progress, issues of snow leopards within other initiatives, estimation of snow leopard population in Tajikistan, and the update of the National Action Plan on conservation of snow leopard ecosystems with the account of the recommendations of GSLEP and based on field practices and information activities of the project in the areas of Tajikistan.</p>	
27. Number of trans-boundary agreements (Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, China, Kyrgyzstan)	1	3	<p>Cumulatively, since the project start the below progress was gained towards achieving the EoP target:</p> <p>1) In March 2018, during the 16th meeting of the Tajik-Kyrgyz Intergovernmental Commission on the Comprehensive</p>	

addressing collaboration in the management of wildlife crime under implementation			<p>Review of Bilateral Issues in Dushanbe, the Protocol was signed between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan on establishing trans-boundary cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, which includes joint activities on inventory of snow leopards and assessment of its prey resources, monitoring of mountainous areas and status of large migratory species of wildlife, and the research and conservation of migratory species of wild animals. The relevant annually updated action plan is being implemented and the progress is reviewed by the Government of Tajikistan.</p> <p>2) In April 2019, the Sughd Resolution was adopted by the participants of Central Asian countries during the Regional Workshop in Sughd Oblast of Tajikistan. The Resolution is being implemented for planning joint initiatives (fieldworks, research) in transboundary areas.</p> <p>3) In September 2020 the Memorandum of Understanding on environment protection was signed between the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the National Environment Protection Agency of the Islamic Government of Afghanistan, aimed at strengthening coordination of environmental activities and information exchange for sustainable development and conservation of biological diversity.</p> <p>4) By the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan No. 546 dated October 27, 2020, the Agreement of the Central Asian countries on snow leopards was ratified. A bilateral action plan for the implementation of the Agreement was signed between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It spells out the plan of actions, the respective national programmes and financing lines, and the responsible actors. The experience of the project and its activities were utilized as a basis for the action plan.</p>	
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Achievements and Highlights

126. The project has produced a number of tangible results, instruments and mechanisms towards the achievement of its objective and results. The most significant and long-standing achievements are described below.

1. The project provided an essential increment towards **a more secured regime and better management, monitoring and enforcement capacities for the protected areas** targeted by the project, namely the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik National Park (306,613 ha and 69,900 ha, respectively) and Sangvor zakaznik (59,000 ha). The improved PA management effectiveness is evidenced through the capacity management scorecard (METT); the scope of project intervention is also detailed in the List of Equipment procured to enhance PA technical capacities and the List of Training organized for the PA staff. Through its lifetime, the project made a significant contribution to improving the protection and management of protected areas, through the following key interventions:
 - Demarcation of protected area boundaries through installation of banners, pointers and boundary markers along the boundaries of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP and Sangvor Refuge to mark the PA areas and increase awareness of local communities,
 - Construction of check-points to ensure control at the national park entry points in Sangvor and Lasksh section of the Tajik National Park,
 - Temporary provision for 18 additional rangers in the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP,
 - Provision of uniforms and toolkits for fieldwork,
 - Development of a wildlife monitoring concept and development of the smart patrolling system adapted to the conditions of Tajikistan for implementation in Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP,
 - Procurement of vehicles, equipment, and communications tools in order to enable the implementation of the smart patrol system, and
 - Enhancement of PA monitoring and enforcement capacities, including enhancement of patrolling system through training. The staff of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP, Sangvor Refuge and the PA Agency (altogether 450 people including additionally hired rangers and community liaison officers) increased their knowledge and skills in implementing the smart patrolling system, wildlife monitoring, wildlife inventory and reporting through workshops and training offered by the project.
2. The development and implementation of a **smart patrol system**⁸. The project engaged relevant international expertise for applying modern technologies in spatial patrolling and monitoring to the mountainous areas of Tajikistan with limited accessibility and irregular internet coverage, and customising the existing data collection and database management systems for smart patrols in Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of the Tajik NP and the Sangvor Refuge. 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, first aid) was designed and deployed to the protected areas, as the PA management institutions and other relevant stakeholders engaged in wildlife monitoring. The project has provided an essential capacity building increment to the PA Management in establishing a core of professionally trained and fully equipped rangers to implement a smart patrol system. The smart patrol system was introduced for the first time in Tajikistan, and it is the only comprehensive monitoring and control instrument in the national protected areas. While full integration of patrol data into park planning and management is still a work in progress, the integration

⁸ As explained in the Project Document, the term 'smart patrol system' has been developed to reflect the integration of science and technology into field-based law enforcement and monitoring in protected areas.

of the smart patrol data with the data management system of the Committee for Environmental Protection has been ensured.

3. The project considerably enhanced the **capacities and coverage for wildlife monitoring** country-wide. By introducing the innovative smart patrol system, strengthening technical and human capacities in the targeted PAs and engaging surrounding communities in the PA management and protection, the area of the Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of the Tajik National Park has been covered by comprehensive wildlife monitoring. Along with that, enforcement capacities have been strengthened as well, as evidenced by the increased number of stopped attempts at illegal hunting of wildlife and incidents of forest cutting in the PAs. Workshops and training on wildlife monitoring and inventory, principles of smart patrolling, use of camera traps for detecting wildlife, including snow leopards, and interpretation of data for proper reporting were offered to PA staff and community rangers in the sections of Tajik National Park in Sangvor, Lakhsh and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, Sarikhosor Nature Park, Dashtijum and Karatag zakazniks. The core staff of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP, Sangvor Refuge and the PA Agency, rangers and community liaison officers improved their skills through online training conducted on smart patrol system, methods of wildlife inventory and installation of camera traps for identification of animals in Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP. Specialists of the National Academy of Sciences, Committee for Environmental Protection, Forestry Agency, local administration, farmers, communities attended the project workshops on wildlife monitoring and protection regulations' enforcement. The project offered SMART patrolling protocols and methodology for the organisation of public monitoring. The Guidelines developed with the project support are in use of the Academy of Sciences, the PA agency and the Forestry Agency.
4. In five years since the project start, the number of incidents of **poaching** of snow leopard and its prey, as well as other illegal incidents in the protected areas, has been reduced to almost zero, as reported by the targeted PAs. Protected area staff and public patrol rangers have been equipped with communication devices (radio sets, phones, satellite phones, GPS devices). The combination of all these measures helped to improve protection capacities and timely detection and prevention of illegal hunting/poaching in protected areas, resulting in the overall decreasing number in poaching and other illegal incidents. Project community liaison experts, jointly with administration of Sangvor and Lakhsh section of Tajik NP and local communities, conducted workshops and meetings devoted to the methods of detection of illegal hunting, elimination of poaching factors, participation in monitoring and protection of protected areas. Local communities are actively involved in the protection of snow leopard ecosystems around protected areas and help the administration of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik National Park to timely identify illegal activities within the territory of the PAs.
5. The project facilitated the agreements between the administration of Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP and the local communities living around these PAs on **benefit sharing**: NTFPs and other local resources, including firewood, medicinal herbs, beekeeping products are distributed on the 50/50 principle between the local residents and PA administration, allowing the communities to receive income from the sale of products and thus improve their welfare. The project hired 18 PA rangers (providing 50% salary and insurance coverage) and two community liaison experts from the local community representatives. With this endeavour the project attempted to improve the livelihoods of those communities from the conservation, development and sustainable use of the Jirgital and Tavildara sections of Tajik NP, and establish **co-management** mechanisms. It should be noted, however, that the scope for the project intervention in this area included certain elements of assurance and sustainability that have not been put in place by the date of project completion, such as a) formalised MOUs between the PA and each adjacent village government and b) a joint co-management structure that can: 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. “Adaptive management” and “recommendations” sections discuss this in detail.

6. The project should be praised for the scope and results of work aimed at involvement of local communities into wildlife monitoring, sustainable pasture management, adoption of alternative fuel sources for conservation of the forests in the snow leopard range, and restoring and rehabilitating degraded pasture and forest areas. The TE confirms the essential contribution of the project in strengthening the wildlife enforcement and networking capacities of the local stakeholders, including local communities.
7. The project justified, tested and promoted the regulations on the decrease in the **number of days of use of high-altitude pastures**. Procurement of hay was a demonstration of an effective method for reduction of the number of days of livestock grazing in the pastures located in key snow leopard habitats by 20 days, as it would enable the livestock to be fed on this forage and kept in temporary stands/landings. This will allow for reduced periods of grazing in summer pastures and prevent overgrazing and land degradation. The project raised awareness of livestock holders regarding their benefits from a delayed spring transhumance. The project developed methodological recommendations on the methods of reducing the number of days of grazing and restoration of high-altitude pastures in the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas, and conducted consultations and training for all the relevant stakeholders. The project-born recommendations for decreasing the number of days of use of high-altitude pastures and other techniques to reduce their degradation were embedded as approved amendments to the Law on Pastures.
8. In strict accordance with the Project Document, the project developed 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). The project supported the establishment of four Pasture User Unions (in addition to six already existing) and, jointly with the PUUs, prepared ten **pasture management plans**, with a specific focus on the high altitude pastures. These pasture management plans included maps of forage areas; maps 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; and a monitoring system. The project offered technical and grant funding support to PUUs and individual pastoralists in the implementation of more sustainable pasture management practices in the high altitude pastures. The project reports 428,256 ha of high-altitude pastures covered by sustainable pasture management plans under implementation. The recommendations of the project experts for the Pasture User Unions to develop high-altitude pasture management plans have been included as part of amendments and additions have been introduced to the Law on Pastures.
9. The project provided targeted investments for implementation of highly visible and replicable **demos** and models aimed to a) incentivise the adoption of more sustainable pasture management practices in the high altitude pastures; b) demonstrate alternatives to wood for delivery of energy and fuel needs in rural communities, c) rehabilitate and restore the ecological functioning of heavily degraded high altitude grasslands, d) rehabilitate degraded high altitude forests; and (iv) the project reports 10,030 ha of high-altitude pastures in Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas to have been rehabilitated or restored and are used in a sustainable manner (Shahristan, Ayni, Rasht, Tojikobod, Lakhsh, Sangvor, Muminobod, Khovaling and Shamsiddin Shokhin districts). The project has directly invested in rehabilitation of 30,000 ha of high-altitude pastures via procurement of seeds and tools for the Pasture User Unions. Along with that, under project small grants 30 ha of high-altitude pastures were restored by public organizations, dehkan farms in Shamsiddin Shohin, Tojikobod, Darvaz, Muminobod and Sangvor districts. Forest restoration areas account for 6,050 ha.

10. The results and benefits of the Small Grants Programme (SGP) implemented by the project were highly praised by the local stakeholders and project partners in the remote areas within the Snow Leopard range. The SGP's activities and results have been summarised by the TE national consultant as presented in [Annex 10](#) to the TE report. Cumulatively, since the project start the project supported 23 projects through the small grants program directly benefiting 2,284 men and 1,491 women (630 households), as well indirectly to 18,491 men and 16,480 women (5,828 households), segregated by thematic activities as follows: a) sustainable pasture management and construction of corrals: 18 projects benefitting 1,396 households (333 directly and 1,063 indirectly); b) adoption of fuel and alternative energy technologies: 2 projects benefitting 4,532 households (133 directly and 4,399 indirectly); c) community ranger pilot project: 1 project benefitting 97 households (64 directly and 33 indirectly); d) development of beekeeping: 2 projects benefitting 433 households (100 directly and 333 indirectly). The SGP was institutionally implemented by an ongoing UNDP SGP thus providing for an increased efficiency and reducing the running costs and operational workload on the UNDP-GEF project staff. The project captured the social and economic benefits of the SGP implementation required for the annual reporting to the GEF as presented above, however, no cost-benefit assessment was available as the basis for replication and scale-up of the successful SGP experience by local farmers/jamoats⁹.
11. Thanks to technical capacity buildings and training deployed by the project, the country **area covered by regular snow leopard (and its prey) monitoring** activities has expanded more than double from the baseline and makes 25% of snow leopard range and 20% for prey. The project National Implementing Partner concluded cooperation agreements for implementing the snow leopard and prey monitoring activities with the National Academy of Sciences, Hunters' Association of Tajikistan, Sangvor section of Tajik National Park, Institute of Zoology. The project has provided funds for the camera traps installation and incremental financing (proportional to the co-financing from the above partners) for monitoring and reporting. The agreements cover the areas in Murgab, Darvaz, Zorkul, Sangvor and Lakhsh districts identified during the project development phase, thus ensuring the expansion of the monitoring coverage of snow leopard habitats as planned at the project onset. The partners confirmed to the TE their intention and capacity to implement monitoring activities covering the reported areas at their own expense.
12. The **reliability of data** on snow leopard population and the number of primary snow leopard pre-project populations in Tajikistan has significantly increased, with the direct impact from the project in the following two directions: a) Installation of camera traps for snow leopard and prey monitoring, in order to enhance data coverage and ensure reliable data updates which allowed cumulatively from the project start, the project supported installation of 112 camera traps covering the total area of 362,673 ha in Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of Tajik NP, Sarikhosor Nature Park, Zorkul Reserve, and also in snow leopard habitat areas in Khorog and Murghab, and b) enhanced PA species protection and wildlife monitoring capacities.
13. The project facilitated a number of **trans-boundary agreements** targeting the snow leopard and its ecosystem. Initially, the target was to focus on trans-boundary collaboration in the management of wildlife crime, however, as the project influence in this particular area alone would have been limited, the idea was to facilitate and stimulate inter-governmental dialogue and agreements for joint action. A Protocol was signed in March, 2018 between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan on establishing trans-boundary cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, which includes joint activities on inventory of snow leopards and assessment of its prey resources, monitoring of mountainous areas and status of large migratory species of wildlife, and the research and conservation of migratory species of wild animals. In April 2019, the project organized a regional meeting in the Sughd region with the participation of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan,

⁹ This is of special reference to a) the use of cheap solar panels and b) pasture restoration projects where the direct financial benefits from the enhanced productivity of the restored pastures are ca. 10 times higher than the cost of seeds – provided that the equipment for restoration was provided by the project and is currently available with the PUUs for farmers.

Kyrgyzstan. The Sughd Resolution was adopted reflecting the decisions taken on the implementation of measures on conservation of the snow leopard ecosystems at the regional level. Finally, in October, 2020 Tajikistan ratified the Agreement of the Central Asian countries on snow leopards.

Room for Improved Impact, Limitations and Constraints

127. The project offered incremental support to the Committee for Environmental Protection in expanding the coverage of PA Cat. I-II (i.e., those having species and landscape protection, patrolling, monitoring and enforcement of protection regulations as the PA key management objectives) via inclusion of the Sangvor Refuge (Cat. IV) into the Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park (Cat.II). However, these initial plans and commitments of the project did not materialise by the time of project completion.

The initial plans for the Sangvor Refuge status change were perfectly sound. First, the refuge was initially established to ensure conservation of valuable biodiversity of mountainous forests and grasslands and reduce the threats to keystone species, such as the Buchara shrew or Pamir shrew (*Sorex buchariensis*) and the snow leopard; as such, the upgrade of the area status to that of a national park would have meant a stronger capacity for attaining the declared objective. Second, the area of the refuge is almost surrounded by the Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park (fig.1), and upgrading the refuge's status would have been very important for conservation continuity and optimisation of the protection, control and enforcement effort.

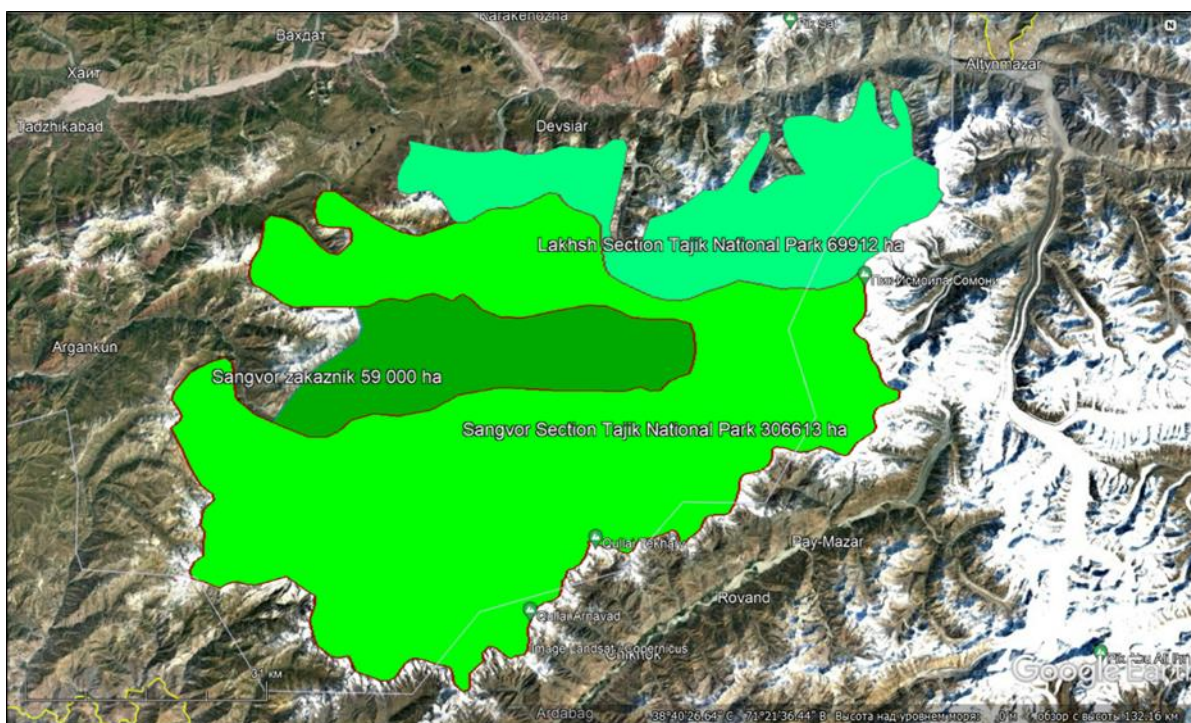


Fig. 1. Protected areas in the focus of the UNDP-GEF project: Sangvor and Lakhsh sections of the Tajik National Park, Sangvor Refuge (zakaznik)

Thirdly, at the time of project concept, the PA Agency (overseeing the Tajik National Park) and the Sangvor Refuge were both subordinate to the Forestry Agency. After the governmental reform of 2020, the PA Agency was transferred to the Committee for Environmental Protection. Since then, the project PIRs contain a record of strong opposition to the refuge's transfer by the leadership of the Forestry Agency.

The project provided for improved management capacities in Sangvor zakaznik through training, provision of transport (motorcycles, horses, donkeys), equipment, infrastructure, demarcation of boundaries and implementing the smart patrol system. The Management Capacity Scorecard for the zakaznik shows the score of 46, which is lower than the score of the National Park. The management deficiencies of the zakaznik (in

comparison to the National Park) are associated with the limited staff, finance, monitoring and enforcement capacities. A forest refuge (zakaznik) mostly deals with sustainable use of forest and grassland resources and NTFP, while the National Park has protection, patrolling, monitoring and enforcement as the primary objectives.

Prior to the UNDP-GEF project, the NBBC staff developed a draft Management Plan for the refuge and a zoning map defining a strict protection zone along the borders with the adjacent Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park occupying approx. 50% of the total area of the refuge and surrounding a narrow farming area, a transhumance zone, an area suitable for recreation, a relic forest zone, and a fragmented buffer zone (fig.2).

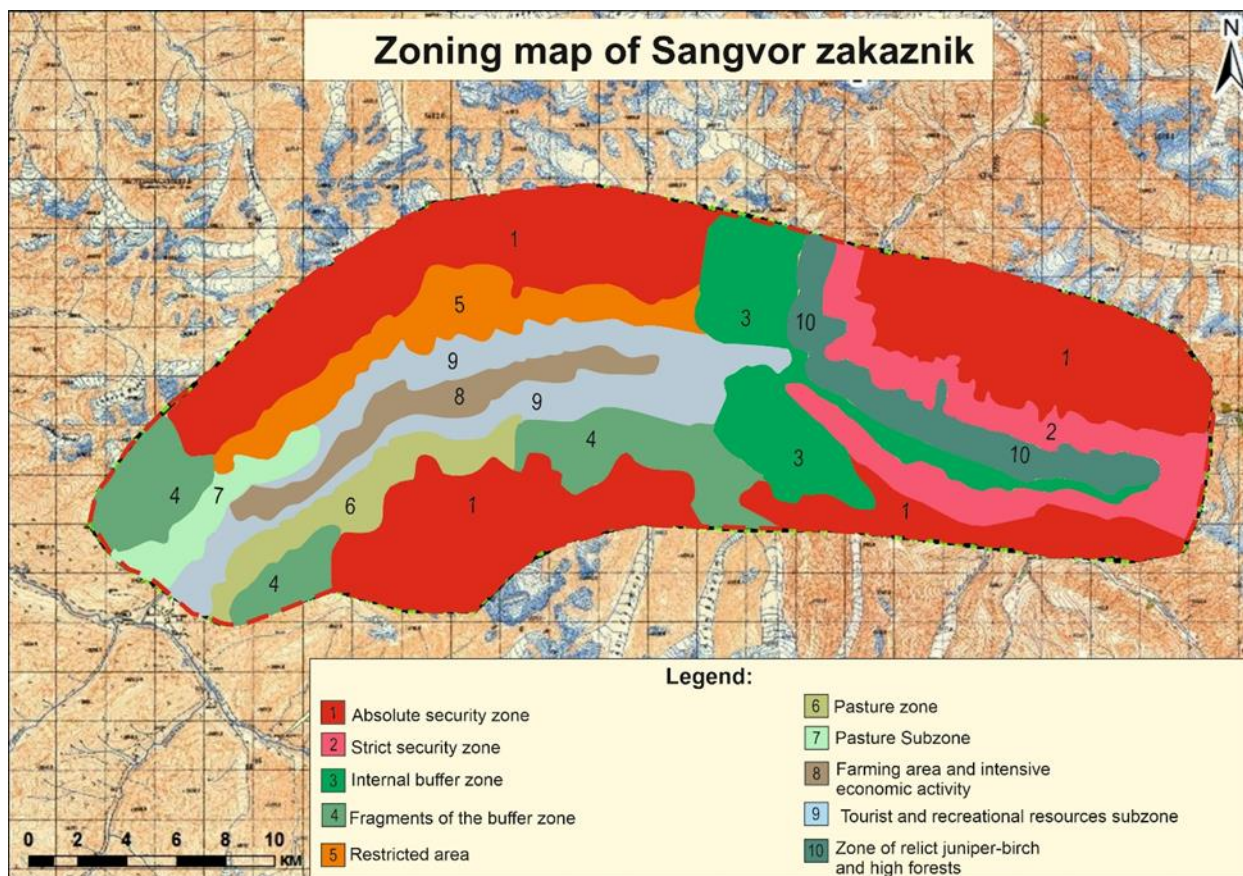


Fig 2. Proposed zoning of the Sangvor refuge

This zoning scheme remained “on paper” and did not become a part of the refuge’s regulatory framework. The draft Management Plan of the Refuge was not adopted nor revised by the Forestry Agency. The Refuge activities are regulated by the statutes and the regulations (Положение) of the refuge; the latter indicates the objectives, the economic activities permitted, and the areas, seasons and norms for the use of the area’s resources, in particular, where intensive agriculture is carried out and where distant pastures for transhumance should be used and on which conditions. The TE got somewhat surprised with the fact that the most recent (i.e., after the governmental reform of 2020) statutes and regulations of the refuge seemed impossible to obtain from the respective authorities during three weeks of the TE’s work on the subject.

The justification documents for upgrading the status of Sangvor zakaznik through its inclusion into the Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park have been prepared and submitted to the Committee for Environmental Protection for confirmation/formalization of the status of this area. Such change should be agreed between the Forestry Agency and the Committee for Environmental Protection and authorized by a Decree of the Government. The project facilitated a series of dedicated consultations and meetings with the Forestry Agency, the PA Agency and the Committee for Environmental Protection. Yet, according to the project Final

Evaluation opinion which is based on the meetings with the principal stakeholders above, the likelihood of the zakaznik's transfer under a different management authority (i.e., from the Forestry Agency to the PA Agency subordinate to the Committee for the Environment Protection) is low.

The TE met with the Deputy Director of the Forestry Agency, who only recently assumed this position as he was relocated from his previous post at the Head of the PA Agency. The TE is grateful for a very focused meeting and an opportunity to ask very straightforward questions; however, the keynote of the discussion offered by the esteemed interviewee was somewhat baffling, as it suggested that there (arguably) was no principal difference in the area management under the PA Agency (i.e., as a Cat. I-II PA) or the Forestry Agency (as a Cat. IV refuge).

This keynote brings the TE to the project baseline situation which was described in the CEO ER as follows: the PAs, at best, "currently only make provision for the employment of a few badly paid and poorly equipped staff in order to maintain a basic presence in the protected area. By example, the Sangvor section of Tajik National Park – a World Heritage Site - has a staff complement of 15 and an annual budget (including HR, operating and capital costs) of less than US\$26,400 per annum (equivalent to ~0.08 US cents/ha/annum or US\$2,200 per month for ALL costs). The section management team has only one vehicle, which at the time of the PPG site visit, was not functional (and has no funds for fuel anyway). The park staff are not uniformed, have no park-funded equipment and pay for their own running costs while working in the park". With such a baseline, there must be little difference between a national park and a refuge in terms of capacities, however, there is still a difference in security: the Sangvor Refuge was established in 1973 and requires reinstatement every 10 years. The TE asked if there is a possibility for the refuge to be cancelled in 2023, and the answer was that the probability is very low and there was no such precedent in the country. Regardless, the TE is of the opinion that before the reinstatement process for the Refuge in 2023 is launched, a possibility to reinstate it "for life" instead of the next 10-year term should be seriously investigated, based on the current Law on Protected Areas (according to the Law, refuges can be established "for life" or for up to 10-year term with a possibility of extension).

The UNDP-GEF project has invested into the technical capacity building of the Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park with the assumption that some of these capacities will cover the expanded area as the Sangvor Refuge becomes a part of the National Park. The project provided for improved management capacities in Sangvor zakaznik through training, provision of transport (motorcycles, horses, donkeys), equipment, infrastructure, demarcation of boundaries and implementing the smart patrol system. Yet, these capacities are still insufficient for effective protection, control, monitoring and enforcement, but, most importantly, these functions are not at the core of the refuge's management objectives. Nominally those are present, however, the main management objective is to ensure and control effective (and sustainable) use of the pasture and forest resources within the refuge. A forest refuge (zakaznik) mostly deals with sustainable use of forest and grassland resources and NTFP, whereas the National Park has protection, patrolling, monitoring and enforcement as the primary objectives. The Sangvor Refuge has four staff-members, one director and three rangers, in charge of control over the use of the territory consisting of 38 thousand ha (65% of the refuge area) of "reserve lands in long-term use by agricultural enterprises and farmers as pastures" and 12 thousand ha of "forested areas". As confirmed by the Forestry Agency, the rangers are mostly dealing with the resource use control and interaction with the farmers and herders.

The TE would like to reiterate here that the refuge was initially established with a primary objective of conservation and monitoring, and it seems that these objectives are now not fully pursued nor supported by required capacities and management regime. Moreover, it is the TE's subjective opinion that the refuge does not get any particular consideration nor attention from the Forestry Agency - while this usually happens in other countries of the region when a protected area gets in the focus of a major donor intervention and responds to the top national conservation priorities. It just seems as if the area is assumed to be too valuable

to give up (to another Agency) but not valuable enough to commit for changes that would have been stimulated by the GEF capacity building instrument targeting this particular PA.

Quoting the Academy of Science's letter to the Government, the Sangvor Refuge is "one of the priceless and rare natural havens of Tajikistan, it has unique landscapes and natural ecosystems, a rich variety of species of flora and fauna, high endemism, as well as historical and cultural values. To fulfill the tasks of preserving the natural resources of this territory, the work on the protection and monitoring of natural complexes, and the development of ecological tourism are very important, but is currently out of scope, which justifies an upgrade of PA status for this area". In other words, it is a beautiful and valuable area which is worthy of being secured and sustainably managed; an honor of having such an area under one's authority should naturally come with a certain responsibility and price – a cost of assigning the area with a secured status, enhanced capacities and opportunities. The PA status should certainly be secured, with or without the transfer and the upgrade. In the TE's opinion, the "transfer package" prepared by the project should have been amended, following the governmental restructuring, and should have offered options: a) a more secured status and management without an actual transfer for the PA (i.e., a lifetime refuge with particular management objectives defined in the statute, regulations and management plan), and b) a change of the PA status and its transfer to another agency (i.e., the original path).

With all this having been said, the TE is reluctant to formulate any further recommendations for the project since, at the time of this report writing, it is operationally completed. Yet, NBBC and/or UNDP might wish to discuss with the Project Steering Committee, at its final meeting and as part of the project Exit Strategy and Sustainability Plan, the following actions as follow-up to the GEF increment initially meant for the Sangvor Refuge:

- For the Committee for Environmental Protection to conclude the consultations with the Forestry Agency regarding the refuge as soon as possible, bearing in mind that the refuge formally "expires" in 2023. Regardless of the outcome of these consultations, the Committee is kindly advised to a) have NBBC involved in consultations and follow-up actions and b) engage relevant expertise to confirm that the "lifetime" re-instatement of the refuge without the change in the PA category is possible, in accordance with the Law on Protected Areas, and prepare relevant documentation for the Government.
- For the Forestry Agency to confirm either their concurrence with the transfer of the refuge into the National Park or keep the refuge and assume responsibilities and costs that are more adequate to the natural value and conservation objectives declared at the time of the Sangvor Refuge's establishment. The responsibilities and costs include the necessary technical capacities for effective patrolling and monitoring, to complement and expand on the capacity building and trainings delivered to the Sangvor Refuge by the UNDP-GEF project.
- For NBBC to find out if the remaining GEF funds can be used for an update of the key justification documents required to support the comprehensive consultations on the Sangvor Refuge status (above), namely the conservation value of the territory (a comprehensive and concise stock-taking of BD values and conservation objectives with the most recent updates from the monitoring and patrolling activities of the UNDP-GEF project); the cost-benefit assessment (assuming the Forestry Agency would be willing to provide financial data)¹⁰; the PA capacity needs assessment; and the update of the package of documents required for re-instatement or re-classification of the Sangvor Refuge in 2023 (the original package dates back to 2019).
- For the Management of the Sangvor Refuge and the Sangvor Section of the Tajik National Park to consider a cooperation agreement for joint patrolling, control and monitoring.

¹⁰ Or one comprehensive ecological and financial feasibility assessment (эколого-экономическое обоснование), as relevant

128. Another key indicator where the project was not able to demonstrate any progress is the level of finance of the PA system. Such indicators have been with the GEF OP2 (PA management effectiveness) projects for decades; the validity of such indicators and whether any trends or figures directly indicate the project impact were questioned many times. The TE is of the opinion that the progress (or the lack of such) with the level of national PA finance can not and should not be attributed to the effort of a stand-alone USD 4mln project; this indicator is in clear context with the overall baseline finance and economic development situation and trends in the country. Total annual funding allocation in 2022 for all categories of protected areas (I-IV) amounted to TJS 3,600,000 or approx. US\$ 346,154 (note: the exchange rate is 10.40 to 1). There has been an increase (of TJS 100,000) in comparison to the previous year. This increase, if applied to the individual PAs, is negligible and does not even come close to matching the high inflation rates in Tajikistan.

129. The project has partially achieved the indicator values for the National Action Plan (NAP) for snow leopard conservation. Draft National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation was approved at the expert level in July 2021 through the series of final inter-agency consultations led by the Academy of Sciences. Individual programs of the NAP have been implemented with the project support by the National Academy of Sciences, its subordinate institutes and other project partners (including Committee for Environmental Protection). The programs under implementation address partners' capacitation in using innovative technologies, reducing the risk of poaching, and developing programs for research and monitoring of wild ungulates and snow leopards. The results of pilot actions implementation have been incorporated into the final draft of the National Action Plan. Based on the formal interagency review, the NAP will be approved by responsible executive agencies in accordance with existing rules for approval of such documents, tentatively by the end of 2022. As initially identified, the key executive agencies will be the National Academy of Sciences and the NBBC.

Response to the MTR recommendations

130. The project Midterm review (MTR) was held December, 2019 – February, 2020 and included an on-site evaluation of project progress in the distant areas of Pamir, Darvoz, Kulyab zone, Rasht, Zeravshan, and Shahristan. The results of the review highlighted the project success in delivering its planned activities, noting that the implementation of the project is adhering to its strategy designed at the outset. Altogether twelve recommendations were made as a result of the Midterm review, which included expanding communication on project results and lessons learnt, strengthening staffing capacities in remote project target areas, strengthening collaboration with neighbouring countries on transboundary cooperation, and expanding the project grant component to ensure better coverage in the communities.

131. The project responded to all the recommendations of the mid-term review (MTR) in a positive and constructive manner and developed a detailed and realistic plan of key actions to ensure necessary follow-up to the MTR recommendations. The TE points out (below) a few recommendations/elements which, in the TE's opinion, were implemented with a significant deviation from the MTR's assumed intention/desired effect.

132. The project was recommended to streamline its effort to collect evidence of co-financing. The project agreed to "prepare a project co-financing confirmation template and provide it to partners in order to collect annual reports on the co-finance provided and to take into account relevant sectoral expense lines". Such a template was developed during the TE; an explicit and detailed confirmation of co-financing was prepared by the project Implementing Partner, NBBC, as a model. However, with other co-financing partners the breakdown of co-financing was impossible to obtain because, as was explained by NBBC, the template is different from what they're used to. UNDP and NBBC are advised to a) communicate to the partners the GEF's increasing attention to the credibility of the co-financing data reported by the projects and b) strengthen the effort to collect co-financing evidence for the PIR (as it will be obligatory starting from next year) and do it in the format that makes it possible to verify, without any additional research and evidence collection, the nature of parallel co-financing for the project.

133. The MTR recommended to increase coordination between snow leopard projects in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan to exchange best practices and lessons learned. The implementation of the recommendation was seriously strained by COVID-19 implications and restrictions. Regardless of this complication, the TE saw no record of best practice nor lessons learned exchange. This criticism is especially notable in the project success in the application of the SMART patrolling system and tailoring of the available and affordable technology (NextGIS) to the case of Tajikistan. The project team had been approached by Fauna & Flora International (FFI) with a request to share this experience for the remote areas of Pamir. It just seems that before sharing, the experience it should be comprehensively collected and analysed, including capturing of lessons learned and elements of best practice (such as cost efficiency of the technology, the open-source code, impact on PA daily management, etc.).

134. The MTR recommended a better effort in knowledge product dissemination, and collection and sharing of best practices among the stakeholders. In response, the project planned that the relevant project knowledge products would be disseminated among all partners, including PAs, in the form of publications/brochures and through the dedicated webpage to be developed on the website of the National Executing Entity (NBBC). The website introduces cover pages of four brochures created to raise awareness about the snow leopard; there is literally nothing else. Some of the knowledge products, such as the methodological recommendations on sustainable use of pastures, have been printed and distributed; however, the TE believes that the project effort in collecting and disseminating best practice and knowledge has not been sufficient. In the 2021 PIR, the UNDP CO Management recommended “accelerating the work on documenting and dissemination of project results, best practices and lessons learnt”. The project team argues that the dissemination took place through a series of thematic workshops and that there is no practical reason for summarizing the project heritage as there is no particular demand for, nor recipient of, such work; the project products and capacity building efforts were very focused and targeted specific audiences; these targeted audiences received the training materials, brochures, etc. and no broader nor more synthetic collection and dissemination of knowledge is required.

135. The project made a commitment to develop an exit strategy by April, 2021. However, due to COVID implications – and in the case of this project the COVID implications were, unfortunately, literally fatal as the team lost their technical leader, Dr. Nematullo Safarov, who was supposed to draft the exit strategy and sustainability plan – these plans did not materialise. The request to prepare an exit strategy and a costed exit plan was reiterated by the UNDP CO in July and December 2021, however, the work is still in progress. This situation is not altogether unique; the TE’s experience with other projects indicated a certain reluctance of teams to come up with a piece of serious reflections and writing while everybody was overloaded with the ongoing activities, project closure preparations, continuity of the team’s professional placement, etc. This particular team with three people filling the space of seven, in the opinion of the TE, has come up with a very ambitious plan for the remaining six months of project implementation in 2022 and overestimated their capacity to timely develop, on top of everything else, a comprehensive exit strategy and a sound sustainability plan in addition to the workload associated with the operational and substantive closure of project activities, monitoring, reporting, evaluation.

136. The TE would like to note that certain elements of the exit strategy were embedded into the Annual Workplan for 2022; however, there is no comprehensive reporting available to assess the level of implementation and the results. There is seemingly little progress with the following 2022 Workplan elements that specifically target the sustainability and up-scaling of project impacts:

- Hiring a legal expert to support the process of negotiating a package of documents for upgrading the conservation status of Sangvor zakaznik;
- Hiring a team of experts to consolidate the monitoring and data management system (SLIM) for compliance with the Global Snow Leopard Conservation Strategy;

- Printing and publication of thematic material on reducing negative impacts to, and enhancing management of forests;
- Hiring an expert to consolidate project achievements for final evaluation.

Relevance and country ownership

137. The project was designed 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. 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. project's relevance has been confirmed by all the project principal stakeholders. The project was designed as a direct response to the request of the Government of Tajikistan for assistance in the implementation of the Global Snow Leopard Survival Strategy and the Bishkek declaration. The project is closely related to the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Tajikistan since it develops improved policies for use of natural resources, forest conservation, expands protected areas and raises the engagement of communities in their management, all of which are the NBSAP priorities.

138. The project was designed to assist the Government with the implementation of principles of the Bishkek Declaration on the Conservation of Snow Leopards (2012), the Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP, 2013) and a set of 12 National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Priorities (NSLEP) developed by each range country government fulfilling its commitments under the GSLEP and the Bishkek Declaration. The "Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alay and Tian Shan ecosystems for Snow Leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods" project in Tajikistan supported the development, discussion, and the implementation of the priority actions contained in the National Action Plan for Conservation of Snow Leopard.

139. Country ownership of the project has been ensured at the time of its design and manifested through its implementation. The project is addressing issues that are recognized among the top priorities in the BD conservation and SLM agenda in the country. The project has been developed and implemented in close cooperation and full appreciation of the needs and priorities of the main governmental partners, first of all the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of Tajikistan. Local stakeholders and communities have participated in the project in a supportive way and have expressed continued support for the sustainability of project results.

Effectiveness

140. Project effectiveness is rated satisfactory based on the achievement rate of the project objective and outcomes. The project brought in a substantive capacity building increment to the BD conservation and SLM agenda in the key areas of the snow leopard range, with several potential aspects for replication and scale-up outside the project intervention area.

141. One essential element that ensured the project effectiveness is a dedicated, proficient and professional team with a great deal of trust among them.

Efficiency

142. Project efficiency is rated satisfactory through a detailed assessment of project results versus the GEF investment. The project met or exceeded, most of the indicator targets, with three exceptions that are currently beyond the project direct scope of influence. The change from the baseline that the project made, or catalysed on the ground, is impressive; in the opinion of many stakeholders, the project value in bringing

in this change and making visible investment in capacity building is the best application of the GEF grant in the country. The scale of the project results is above and beyond the corresponding project budget, relative to other GEF projects, as the project results are comparable to many full-sized projects. Project delivery rate is adequate, and project management costs are significantly below the expected limits. The TE notes the savings of the GEF PMC budget as an implication of the understaffing issue that the project was facing since its mid-term, and the re-phasing of management expenses to UNDP TRAC funds as a measure to keep the GEF management costs below the established threshold. The documented project co-financing is now assessed at 103%. The project team supported by the IP is highly professional and has demonstrated excellent planning, implementation, monitoring, and financial management skills.

Sustainability

143. The assessment of sustainability weighs the risks for continuation of benefits from the project. The overall sustainability of project outcomes is rated Moderately Likely¹¹.

144. Socio-economic risks to sustainability are limited, and sustainability in this regard is considered likely. The project made no practical nor regulatory intervention that challenges the existing land tenure or access to local resources and ecosystem services. Local communities are by and large supportive of the enhanced management capacities of the Tajik National Park and actively participate in wildlife monitoring and other BD-beneficial activities around the PAs. The small grants programme implemented by the project catalysed the socio-economic benefits and improved livelihood options for the local communities in the remote mountain areas and stimulated an incremental shift to more sustainable land use (focused on grazing and forest use) practices. These changes are likely to be sustained, at least moderately, after the project phase-out.

145. Environmental risks to sustainability are also not critical, and this aspect of sustainability is considered likely. There are some long-term environmental concerns that need to be monitored, but these are not expected to affect the project results in any major way in the near to mid-term future. These issues include: a.) The future impacts of climate change (which may be significant in high mountain ecosystems); b) The potential for further degradation of high-altitude forests and pastures and BD loss to poaching, due to continuous PA capacity constraints and insufficient PA regime control and enforcement capacities; c.) The sustainability of grazing regimes outside the PAs and enforcement of the newly amended Law on Pastures; and d.) Any future expansion of trophy hunting activities on community lands bordering the PAs.

146. Institutional risks and governance issues related to sustainability are not significant. The institutional sustainability is rated “highly likely” as a reflection of the key role of NBBC for ensuring the sustainability for many of the project endeavours. The project Implementing Partner (NBBC) and the key project stakeholders spared no effort to establish the required level of engagement and ownership over project endeavours and remain fully engaged through the institutional mechanisms supported by the project (Pasture User Unions (PUUs) and Participatory Forest Management) as the project support phases out.

147. Financial risks to sustainability are considered high and the financial sustainability is rated moderately unlikely. During the six years of project implementation, the PA funding picture has not changed, while the overall economic situation in the country does not indicate any change of PA financing for the near future. It is unlikely that the PA funding will drop, but an increase is also highly unlikely. The funding of PAs, and, in particular, the modest resources allocated for the staff and maintenance of assets expose the project increment aimed at PA capacity building to risk of its sustainability after project completion.

148. One particular concern raised by the project Final Evaluation is the end-of-project impact value and sustainability of the output related to engagement of 18 rangers for the Tajik NP. In the Sangvor section of

¹¹ Based on GEF evaluation policies and procedures, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the lowest rating for any of the individual components.

the Tajik National Park, three rangers supported by the project will continue working as PA staff after the project's closure, five were employed by the local forestry division. In the Lakhsh section, unfortunately, all rangers hired by the project left in the last year of project implementation (due to significant salary decrease). At the project onset, the protected areas did not have the data and knowledge of their BD values. Therefore, the wildlife protection and management activities were not based on any planning, zoning or area-based management. Hiring rangers was an economically necessary and expedient action. People got jobs and skills, and protected areas got provided with the monitoring data and the opportunity to do their patrolling and monitoring work more professionally. Rangers who have lost their jobs provided by the project will be able to find work with the application of these acquired skills. They accompany hunters and tourists. This is a seasonal but well-paid job. However, strictly speaking, the project did not fulfil the wishes of the protected areas and gave them rangers only for four years, and not permanently. In an ideal strategy, the management of protected areas would have to take care to find an opportunity to pay for them permanently in extra-budgetary funds, or to agree with them that they will be temporarily involved. Unfortunately, the protected areas could not offer adequate financial conditions to keep rangers on a permanent basis.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

149. The gender considerations were duly taken into account in the project strategy design. A respective section of the Prodoc gives an overview of key gender issues, and sets 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.

150. A project-specific Gender Analysis and Action Plan were developed in 2019. While the Gender Analysis defines the gender dimension of the project, in accordance with the Prodoc, and discusses the mechanisms for the project to address those, the Gender Action Plan lists key project activities with the gender-based expected results, which are mostly the number of women who are benefiting from these activities. Gender mainstreaming is part of the implementation of project activities and gender activities are reported in annual progress reports.

151. The Gender Action Plan identified the following areas for Gender Mainstreaming:

- a. Facilitate the employment, training and equipping of woman as park rangers (Output 1.2), smart patrol trainers (Output 1.2), community liaison officers (Output 1.4), leskhoz forest enforcement staff (Output 2.3), local environmental enforcement staff (Output 2.3) and community rangers (Output 2.3).
- b. Actively encourage the equitable use of women labour and supervisors from local rural villages in: the planning and implementation of pasture management plans (Output 2.1); the planning and restoration of degraded high-altitude pastures (Output 2.1); and the planning and rehabilitation/restoration of high-altitude forests.
- c. Ensure that women-owned and/or managed businesses participate equitably in the procurement of project-funded equipment and infrastructure (all outputs).
- d. Ensure that the reach of project-funded education/awareness-raising programmes, sustainable livelihood development support, and skills training in villages surrounding Jirgital and Tavildara sections of Tajik National Park include both male- and female-headed households from the targeted villages (Output 1.4).
- e. Ensure that the interests of women and women-headed households are adequately represented on Park Management Committees (Output 1.4), Pasture User Unions (Output 2.1) and PFM Committees (Output 2.2); and are actively involved in the planning of protected areas, pastures and forests in the project planning domain.

- f. Ensure that the reach of project-funded support in villages surrounding Jirgital and Tavildara sections of Tajik National Park equitably includes both male- and female-headed households from the targeted villages (Output 1.4).
- g. Actively assist women-headed households living in the high-altitude areas of the Hissar-Alay and Vakshsh-Darvaz areas to access: (i) micro-financing for sustainable livelihoods; and (ii) technical and financial support from project grants for developing and installing alternative fuel and energy systems and implementing more sustainable pasture management practices.
- h. Commit dedicated financial and technical support to addressing the significant knowledge constraints in pasture users from women-headed households.
- i. Ensure that the National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation includes strategies, activities and budgets that will enable and finance the equitable involvement of women in the implementation of the action plan.
- j. Advocate for an increase in the number of women involved in research and monitoring of snow leopard and prey populations.
- k. Collaborate with the project-contracted businesses and international experts to continually develop and implement mechanisms which may further strengthen the capacities of local women and women-headed households across the project planning domain.

152. In the TE Opinion, most of the Gender Action Plan elements listed above have been successfully implemented by the project. The project provided equal opportunities for men and women to participate in numerous training opportunities offered for local communities in various regions of the country, including pasture users, PA and forestry staff (covering 2,823 participants, including 862 women) strengthened the overall level of knowledge. The training also developed specific skills in the field of environmental monitoring, installation of camera traps, applying sustainable approaches to the use of pastures and forest resources, implementing methods for pasture restoration and enhancing forest productivity. All of this also helped to expand the understanding of benefits from using alternative energy and heat sources.

153. The project provided technical and material assistance in the form of micro-grants for restoration and rehabilitation of degraded pastures and forests, with the associated environmental benefits of improved pastures and forests, and alternative income options from ecological tourism and beekeeping for local residents. It directly contributed to increased income and receipt of profits for 435 households, which included 2,608 people (1,685 men and 923 women). The total direct and indirect benefits from the project small grant support in 2020-2021 helped 10,244 people (4,189 of them women). Through the implementation of the small grants programme, the project provided equal access for men and women to alternative livelihoods opportunities associated with developing and installing alternative fuel and energy systems and implementing more sustainable pasture management practices.

154. The project success in engaging local women in environmental protection was noted by the Donor (Global Environment Facility) and presented at the GEF global gender webinar as a best practice. It is an outstanding example of successful involvement by local women in a field which had never previously seen their involvement. The success story (<https://www.undp.org/eurasia/stories/women-rangers-rescue>) explains that men were always looked to as the breadwinners, but many of them have now gone to foreign lands to find better opportunities. Local women have filled the vacuum by taking on unprecedented positions in the field where they directly promote environmental protection, including protection of the snow leopards. Working directly in the field among numerous wild animals, they provide wonderful examples of the new roles for women as rangers, guides and conservationists. They are also providing a catalyst for the new field of eco-tourism.

Social and Environmental Safeguards and related cross-cutting aspects of project design and implementation

155. According to the UNDP Social and Environmental and Social Screening Protocol (SESP) developed at the project design phase, the project was designed, inter alia, to support more sustainable livelihoods of the local communities while improving their living conditions, through the implementation of fiscal and other incentives aimed to encourage an incremental shift to more sustainable land use (focused on grazing and forest use) practices. It was expected that a GEF project will not cause any harm to the environment or to any stakeholder and, where applicable, it will take measures to prevent and/or mitigate adverse effects.

156. The project was planned to specifically: (i) facilitate the economic beneficiation (from direct employment, contractual work, provision of services, income from hunting concessions, etc.) of communities living around targeted PAs in return for a reduction in illegal activities in the PAs; (ii) help rural communities to plan, source funding for and implement alternative livelihoods; (iii) provide technical and financial grant support to pastoralists in return for a shift to more sustainable pasture management practices; and (iv) provide small grants to assist rural communities and local governments to install alternative fuel and energy technologies in return for a reduction in harvesting of wood for fuel and energy needs from forests.

157. One institutional element that was to be tested by the project, and which is indeed an innovative and complex instrument that's still rarely practiced in the region is the co-management arrangements for the protected areas that allow for meaningful engagement of the community stakeholders and vulnerable local groups. The TE failed to see such a mechanism tested and working; no Park Management Committees have been established nor planned, and no changes in PA governance were introduced (please see Recommendations section for detail). At the same time, the project did a lot for raising awareness and providing sustainable livelihood opportunities for the communities living in the vicinity of protected areas. Outside the PAs, the project worked actively with the Pasture User Unions (PUUs) and Participatory Forest Management (PFM) committees - as means of improving the communication, collaboration and cooperation between tenure holders, rights holders, natural resource users and the relevant state, regional and local administrations, as declared in the project SESP document.

158. The TE confirms the positive contribution of the project to poverty/environment nexus or sustainable livelihoods, mostly visible from the implementation of the small grants programme targeting local communities. The TE updated the social and environmental risks and safeguards for the project and confirmed the risk validity and ratings at the project exit phase; the project risk log was duly updated.

GEF Additionality

159. 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.

Catalytic/Replication Effect

160. As stated already at the MTR phase, the engagement of NBBC as the project executing partner provides a strong basis for replication and up-scaling, as NBBC is a key node in the government's engagement on various aspects of biodiversity conservation, as well as associated sustainable land management practices, which must incorporate biodiversity considerations.

161. The following specific elements of project catalytic effect and potential for replication and scaling-up of the project impact have been confirmed during the TE:

- In full accordance with the Project Document, the lessons learnt in the development of a smart patrol system will then guide the incremental future roll-out of smart patrol systems in other PAs across the snow leopard range.
- The Pasture-Meliorative Trust will replicate the high-altitude pasture restoration experience to similar areas in the high mountain zone, as the enhanced productivity and sustainable use of these pastures are at the core of the Trust's objectives.
- Model pasture management plans developed by the project will be replicated by the Pasture Users' Unions in the areas not covered by the project. The replication potential is embedded in the newly amended Pasture Law where preparation of such management plans is mandatory.
- The project made sure that the sustainable grazing and forest use practices have been demonstrated and embedded in regulations (Pasture Law, Management Plans for Pasture User Unions, Forest Management and restoration best practices disseminated through Participatory Forest Management Committees).

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS

Main Findings, Conclusions and Lessons Learnt

162. In comparison with many other GEF-funded projects in the region, this intervention was very targeted, designed in great detail and focused on very concrete capacity-building actions, demonstration of benefits from change of land use practices, awareness and outreach activities. This was a project with many plans and many tangible and visible results. It was a relatively small-scale intervention that managed to make a big difference. The TE ratings, findings and conclusions are discussed throughout the TE report and presented in the Executive Summary section, paras 14-45. The main **lessons learned** from the project are presented below.

163. In order to be eligible for the GEF funding, a project has to meet national needs and national priorities. While the national priorities are “the big picture”, a detailed capacity needs assessment at the level of particular areas, stakeholder groups, coalitions and individuals performed at the PPG stage will make a case for concrete on-the-ground investments that are essential for the GEF increment to change the baseline.

Lesson 1: Big investments make fast and visible delivery; demonstrable capacity building efforts catalyse replication and scale-up; but in many cases, small-scale models and demos and tailored, unique practical solutions and incentives on the ground make real difference.

164. Since a project is targeting national needs and priorities, it is imperative that government entities be involved. They should feel like they are custodians for the project and its potential achievements. Only through such involvement will there be a strong likelihood for long-term sustainability. This is particularly relevant to the Implementing Partner for this particular project.

Lesson 2: The governmental buy-in and the national ownership of the project at the level of the Implementing Partner is key to the project implementation success and its long-term sustainability.

165. The TE believes that the project design was key to its success. The project document was used as a “blue print” throughout the project implementation.

Lesson 3: A sound design and detailed planning of work at the project PPG stage guides the project along the path for subsequent successful project implementation and contributes notably to the likelihood of that success. By developing a good, detailed design for each step of the project, one increases the chances that the project meets its goals.

166. The project has effective stakeholder engagement through various partnership approaches. The number of partnership agreements concluded by the project is enormous, and some of the partnerships, if not all, will have a long-term effect and will continue after project completion.

Lesson 4: Stakeholder coalitions at the local level, such as Pasture Users Unions and Forest Management Committees “attached” to the local governance bodies, if engaged in a transparent, inclusive and mutually beneficial manner, become the institutional basis of the project sustainability.

167. The project risk assessment at the project onset was perfectly sound. However, the risks were not detailed to the level of concrete project activities. While certain output- and activity-level risks had been added at the project inception, the overall risk assessment being generic wasn’t linked to concrete project endeavours. This generic picture remained valid till the project end; there was no need to revise the generic management responses to the generic (albeit valid!) risk assessment.

Lesson 5: Sometimes the most critical risks tend to materialize, as happened with this project’s plans to upgrade the status of the Sangvor Refuge through its inclusion into the surrounding Sangvor section of the

Tajik National Park. Since the Refuge became subordinate to a different national agency, the project declared any further impact on the transfer outside the project scope and influence, and classified the failure with the Refuge status upgrade as “lack of capacity or the necessary political will”. The risk materialized, yet, the response was not particularly proactive.

168. The awareness raising and PR activities of the project were implemented with high impact and vigour not because there were planned and financed and, therefore, had to be implemented, but because the team saw a real impact and feedback from implementing them.

Lesson 6: When environmental education and public involvement work is carried out with specific goals, with the active involvement of local governance structures, and focuses on specific tasks with a visible, tangible effect, it will be a success. The success will occur with or without professionally organized PR campaigns, designs, logos, slogans, innovative PR techniques and tools. Also, the project demonstrated a massive involvement and a very visible effect particularly from the local community engagement work only because the team and the partners (mostly NGOs) invested a lot into this work, but also because the mentality and human culture are such that environmental education campaigns are of interest primarily to the participant himself. A large number of people of all ages participate in them, with joy and inspiration and a desire to bring success to the endeavour they undertake, be it community monitoring of wildlife, a photo exhibition in a next-door café, or a Snow Leopard festival.

169. The project is criticized by the TE for low visibility of project results and impact. The project accomplished a great deal, however, it is difficult to physically trace the project heritage outside the project office.

Lesson 7: The project exit phase should be very thoroughly planned in order to be successful. Capturing of immediate and long-term impact, analysing sustainability and scale-up aspects of project impacts and best practices and lessons learnt from its implementation takes time and extra effort from the project teams. These teams, by the time of project phase-out, are already over-burdened by final reporting, evaluation, collection of evidence, operational and substantive closure processes. The project teams should rely on external help and expertise when the internal capacity and/or time constraints make it impossible to conclude the project exit phase in a comprehensive and satisfactory manner.

Lesson 8: The Terminal Evaluation should be planned to start its in-country work at least two months before the project operational closure. The project team effort in collecting data and evidence for the yearly reporting should precede the TE exercise. With the proper planning, a TE exercise might help the project team a lot with the analysis of strengths and weaknesses in project performance, identification and assessment of new risks and sustainability issues, capturing of lessons learned and, overall, creating the project legacy for the future. It is, however, premature to think that the TE alone would be able, in the very limited timeframe, to capture all the aspects of project performance, all linkages, impact, indirect effects and catalytic roles.

Lesson 9: Combining the project final reporting phase with that of the final evaluation might also be a good scenario – provided that enough time is allocated for each. A TE’s efficiency significantly increases without a need for translation and interpretation, while a TE’s effectiveness is boosted when a TE international consultant a) is supported by a national evaluation expert and b) comes with a solid understanding of the project baseline and its implementation environment. In this context, a recommendation to invest a maximum into a desk phase and have extensive consultations with the project team before reaching out to the project stakeholders comes from this TE’s experience. It also helps a great deal if the evaluation team and the implementation team speak the same language, both literally and professionally. The TE is most grateful to this project team and all the stakeholders she met, for speaking Russian with her and conducting all the

interviews in an open, constructive manner with a view towards learning from the exercise and using this experience in their future projects.

Recommendations

The specific recommendations for the project phase-out are as follows:

1. For UNDP and IP, to support the project operational and financial closure with a comprehensive exit plan. As agreed during the TE meeting with the UNDP CO, make sure that all pending contract commitments are closed (including two incomplete construction/repair objects) before the project financial closure.
2. For the NIM IP, to prepare a sustainability plan and communicate its key actions and responsibilities to the principal stakeholders. Present both the exit plan and the sustainability plan at the project final Steering Committee meeting.
3. For the NIM IP as an institutional successor of the Project Team, to make the project's main achievements visible, analyze the end-of-project impact for your stakeholders and for the general public, and present it through leaflets, articles, success stories. Collect and disseminate best practices and lessons learnt from the project interventions. In particular, document the lessons learnt from, and good practices in, the development and implementation of the smart patrol system to guide the future expansion of smart patrols to other PAs. Consider placing the "exit" products above at the NBBC's website, making sure that the website has references to the knowledge products developed by the project.

The recommendations, reflecting on specific outputs or aspects of this project's performance, are as follows:

4. For the NCBB, to consider implementing the course of actions suggested by the TE in response to the failure with the project plans to re-classify the Sangvor refuge, as presented in [para 127 of the TE report](#).
5. For the NCBB, to plan a dedicated meeting with the Forestry Agency to discuss the findings, results and recommendations of the Terminal Evaluation. Discuss the plans of this project that did not materialize, as listed in [para 93 of the Adaptive Management section of the TE Report](#), and could be brought forward within the context of the upcoming GEF 7 project. Promote a more prominent role for the Agency in the upcoming project, as a partner, decision-maker (in the SC), and a liaison to the project area-based forestry management units.

The TE recommendations that are intended to further enhance the capacity for implementing future projects¹² include:

6. It might be more efficient for the project reporting processes to record the impact and effect of a concrete measure or intervention right when one sees it on the ground. The PMU is advised to create a reporting data base, an evidence base and the project knowledge base as the project progresses with the implementation and not only when it's actually time to report. Special attention should be given to the evidence base for PIR reporting, including the co-financing evidence. The PMU might consider specific instruments developed during this TE, such as the SGP Results and Resources Table, the Co-financing Tracking Table, and the Beneficiary Tracking Tool, for future use and modification. Also, the M&E for the future projects should be strengthened where it concerns project adaptive management: any adaptive management action should be justified, recorded, and discussed openly

¹² The recommendations are addressed to the future PMU of the upcoming GEF-7 FSP, as well as to NBBC and the UNDP CO

and transparently. This is particularly relevant to the project onset plans that do not tend to materialize.

7. The ToRs for the project substantive activities directly contributing to the achievement of the Results Framework targets should include improved reporting requirements, so that the substantive reports from subcontracts backed up with figures, maps, etc. could be used as evidence of project achievements. These are to be attached to the annual PIRs and verified by the MTR and TE. The reports should include an executive summary with the description of the task, its scope, methodology and results, and quantitative and qualitative statements of impact. The ToRs should also include the indicators of performance for the output/activity to be contracted, in accordance with the Results Framework and Monitoring Plan for the project, which are annexed to the Project Document and amended as required in the course of project adaptive management. Relevant indicators and means of verification should be proposed by the ToRs developer and agreed to with the contractor as part of the contract conditions. If more than one report is commissioned to support the project reporting for a particular RF indicator, the Component Leader or CTA should prepare an evidence note summarizing all relevant reports and their findings, impact indicators and qualitative and quantitative evidence of impact and progress. UNDP and NCBB should consider an enhanced capacity building effort aimed at potential and actual project contractors, so that the contract requirements are met, the ToRs get fully implemented, and the contract reporting (including qualitative and quantitative evidence of progress against project performance indicators) is improved.
8. The TE advises NCBB to invest in professional help with the format of contracts, agreements, cooperation LOAs, letters of intention, etc., entered into by NCBB in its capacity as the project Implementing Partner. It is understood that NCBB generally follows one particular contract form based on the LOA with UNDP on provision of project support services. This format a) is not particularly relevant for cooperation agreements where two parties cooperate in implementation of parallel activities and ensure synergies and co-financing, and b) does not particularly respond to the nature of most contractual works (not services) engaged by the project. The contract forms should be reasonable, responsive to the principal requirements of UNDP procurement and financial policies, and should not contain statements nor conditions that are not reflective of the nature of contracted works or services, or are alien to the national contractual regulations and practices. The contracts should be free from elements that might potentially create risks to the relationship with the project partners or reveal weaknesses for potential legal cases (such as intellectual property rights, penalty for delayed performance, etc.).
9. Based on the most recent GEF guidelines, the PMU should develop a process for yearly confirmation and verification of the project co-financing. Every year, as part of the annual reporting (PIR) exercise, the PMU should be collecting firm evidence to confirm the co-financing. Copies of evidence should be maintained by the UNDP CO for any audit purpose, as well as made available for verification by the independent project terminal evaluation. For the parallel co-financing from sectoral ministries, specific guidance with the relevance criteria should be developed by the UNDP CO in cooperation with the sectoral stakeholders. This will ensure reliability and consistency of reporting and evidence. The methodology for collecting information on co-financing which has materialized should be streamlined; the formats for reporting and evidence should be shared with the partners and supported by relevant capacity building exercise. The current version of the NCBB co-financing letter can be used as a model.
10. The IP together with the future GEF 7 project team might consider preparation of two budget revisions a year, one in March and the second one toward the year-end, to ensure that the ASL for January-February of the following year is approved beforehand and the project does not have to wait for it in the new year.

11. The future project(s) might consider engaging international consultants as an outside help when the team's capacity is strained, be it a complicated case of an innovative patrolling system, the best practice for ecosystem restoration, or an exit strategy for the project that would be prepared in time, supported with comprehensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders, and would actually work.
12. A timely preparation of the exit strategy and a sustainability plan is vital for a successful project phase-out. The exit strategy supported by a costed exit plan, and a sustainability plan for the project should be embedded in the project M&E design.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference (ToR)

Services/Work Description: International Consultant for Project Terminal Evaluation

Project/Programme Title: PIMS 5437 Tajikistan - UNDP-GEF project “Conservation and sustainable use of Pamir Alay and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection and sustainable community livelihoods” implemented in Tajikistan

Consultancy Title: International Consultant for Terminal Evaluation

Duty Station: Home-based with 10-day visit to Tajikistan

Duration: 28 June – 4 August 2022

Expected start date: 28 June 2022

1. BACKGROUND

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

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 km². 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. 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. This project directly supports the implementation of the priority actions contained in the NSLEP 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).

The total cost of envisaged investment in the project was estimated at US\$23,791,370, of which US\$ 4,181,370 constituted grant funding from GEF, US\$ 440,000 was TRAC commitment from UNDP; and US\$19,200,000 comprised co-financing from national government, local government, the private sector, NGOs and UNDP.

The National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center is the main institution responsible for different aspects of project implementation. The NBBC works in close cooperation with the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP), State Institution for Specially Protected Natural Areas and local forestry departments on project sites. The NBBC coordinates all project activities at the local level, in close collaboration with the district (Jamoat) government authorities in each of the targeted regions.

Throughout the project's development, the following affected national and local government institutions are directly involved as well in project development, including the Committee for Environmental Protection, Ministry of Agriculture, Committee for Land Management, Geodesy and Cartography, The Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan and its subordinate institutes.

2. SCOPE OF WORK, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED WORK

TE PURPOSE

The **purpose** of the evaluation is to provide an independent external view of the progress of the project at its completion, and to provide feedback and recommendations to UNDP and project stakeholders.

The overall **objective** of the evaluation is to assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

The specific **objectives** of the Terminal Evaluation are to:

- Assess progress toward achievement of expected project objective and outcomes
- Identify and document lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project and
- Make recommendations necessary to help consolidate and support sustainability of the project results.

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the [UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects](#).

TE APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The TE report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The International Evaluation Consultant will be supported by a National Consultant to undertake this assignment and will be responsible for the preparation of a high-quality report and timely submission.

The International Evaluation Consultant and the National Consultant will form the Terminal Evaluation Team. The TE team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP) the Project Document, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based evaluation. The TE team will review the baseline and midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at the CEO endorsement and midterm stages and the terminal Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the TE field mission begins.

The TE team is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), Implementing Partners, the UNDP Country Office, the Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful TE. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to government counterparts, in particular the Committee for Environmental Protection and the GEF Operational Focal Point, State Institution for Specially Protected Natural Areas and local forestry departments on project sites, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan and its subordinate institutes; UNDP Country Office and project team; executing agencies, senior officials and task team/component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project beneficiaries, academia, local government and CSOs, etc.

Additionally, the TE team is expected to conduct field missions to the key snow leopard ecosystems of the Tien Shan and Pamir-Alay and project interventions sites in Khatlon region, the Districts of Republican Subordination, Sughd region and the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region of Tajikistan, which may include the following project sites: Dashtijum (Samsiddin Shokhin District), Sarikhosor (Baljuvan district), Sangvor and Lyakhsh sections of the Tajik National Park (Sangvor and Lyakhsh districts), Iskanderkul (Aini district), Shakhristan District, Khorog city, Murgab district.

The specific design and methodology for the TE should emerge from consultations between the TE team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the TE purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation must be clearly outlined in the TE Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the TE team.

The final report must describe the full TE approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the evaluation.

Important Note. If a data collection/field mission is not possible to/within the country due to security or any other relevant reasons, then remote interviews may be undertaken through telephone or online (skype, zoom etc.). International evaluation consultant can work remotely with the national consultant in the field if it is safe for them to operate and travel.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT

- Conduct document review and data gathering;
- Design and develop appropriate, detailed evaluation methodologies for TE;
- Lead the TE Team in planning, conducting, and reporting on the evaluation with clear division of labor within the Team, ensuring timeliness of reports;
- Lead drafting and finalization of the Inception Report for the Terminal Evaluation;
- Use of best practice methodologies in conducting evaluation;
- Lead presentation of the draft evaluation findings and recommendations;
- Organize the de-briefing to the UNDP Country Office in Dushanbe and Project Management Team;
- Lead the drafting and finalization of the Terminal Evaluation Report

3. Expected Outputs and deliverables

#	Deliverable	Approx. Timeframe
	TE Inception Report: TE team clarifies objectives, methodology and timing of the TE.	5 July 2022
	Presentation: Initial Findings presented to project management and the Commissioning Unit at the end of the TE mission.	20 July 2022
	Draft Terminal Report: full draft report with annexes.	27 July 2022
	Terminal TE Report + Audit Trail: revised final report and TE Audit trail in which the TE details how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final TE report.	4 August 2022

4. Institutional arrangements/reporting lines

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

In accordance with expected outputs and deliverables, the TE team submit reports to UNDP IRH/ RTA, UNDP Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability Cluster and UNDP Snow Leopard Project Manager for review outputs, comments, certify approval/acceptance of works afterwards.

5. Experience and qualifications

I. Academic Qualifications:

- A Master's degree in biodiversity conservation, natural resource management, environmental economics, or other closely related field.

II. Years of experience:

- At least 5 years of demonstrated working experience in conducting project mid-term or terminal evaluations preferably for GEF (biodiversity conservation, land degradation, sustainable forest management, etc.) and results-based management evaluation methodologies.
- Minimum 10 years of experience in relevant technical areas.
- Experience applying SMART indicators 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 in evaluating projects at the national / country level.
- Knowledge of and experience working in CEE and Central Asia countries.

- 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; and project evaluation/review experience within United Nations system will be considered an asset.

III. Language:

- Proficiency in English is a requirement. Knowledge of Russian is an asset.

IV. Competencies:

- Strong working knowledge of the UN and more specifically the work of UNDP in support of government;
- Sound knowledge of results-based management systems, and monitoring and evaluation methodologies; including experience in applying SMART (S Specific; M Measurable; A Achievable; R Relevant; T Time-bound) indicators;

6. Payment Modality

Payment to the individual contractor will be made based on the actual number of days worked, deliverables accepted and upon certification of satisfactory completion by the manager.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final TE Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft TE report to the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final TE report and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the TE Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed TE Audit Trail

Annex 2 Evaluation Matrix¹³

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project's objective fit within the priorities of the national stakeholders, project site-based stakeholders and local communities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project objective and national policy priorities and strategies, as stated in official documents and confirmed by national stakeholders during interviews Level of coherence between project objective and stated priorities of site-based stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National policy documents and national legislation in the field of relevance Government stakeholders Project reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with government stakeholders Project team interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the project concept originate from national stakeholders, and/or were relevant stakeholders sufficiently involved in project development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of involvement of national stakeholders in project origination and development as indicated by number of planning meetings held, representation of stakeholders in planning meetings, and level of incorporation of stakeholder feedback in project planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project staff Local and national stakeholders Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project's objective fit GEF strategic priorities and operational principles, Aichi Targets, SDGs, and the priorities set in UNDP CPD and UNDCS? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project objective and GEF strategic priorities Level of conformity with GEF operational principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEF strategic priority documents for period when project was approved Current GEF strategic priority documents GEF operational principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project's objective support implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity? Other MEAs, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkages between project objective and elements of the CBD, such as key articles and programs of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CBD website National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review

¹³ The TE is grateful for Mr. Josh Brann, international project development and evaluation consultant, for sharing the model evaluation matrix that he once developed as a model

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
including Ballast Water Management Convention?			
Project Strategy: Results Framework/Logframe			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project objective likely to be met? To what extent and in what timeframe? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of progress toward project indicator targets relative to expected level at current point of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the project's outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of progress toward project indicator targets relative to expected level at current point of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Online interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How SMART the project indicators, midterm and end-of-project targets are? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conformity of Logframe indicators with the SMART criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project developers/development partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Online interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are broader development and gender aspects of the project being monitored effectively? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SESP assessments Gender mainstreaming indicators, implementation of the Gender Action Plan and other specific instruments introduced after project start Project surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Online interviews
Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key factors contributing to project success or underachievement? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of documentation of and preparation for project risks, assumptions and impact drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the planned outputs being produced? Are they likely to contribute to the expected project outcomes and objective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of project implementation progress relative to expected level at current stage of implementation Existence of logical linkages between project outputs and outcomes/impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the planned indicator targets being achieved?? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of project implementation progress relative to expected level at current stage of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project reporting (PIRs) IAS Tracking Tool Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Online interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the anticipated outcomes likely to be achieved? Are the outcomes likely to contribute to the achievement of the project objective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output-based project progress and delivery rate Existence of logical linkages between project outcomes and impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project reporting (PIRs) Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the key assumptions and impact drivers relevant to the achievement of Global Environmental Benefits likely to be met? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions undertaken to address key assumptions and target impact drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are impact level results likely to be achieved? Are the likely to be at the scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the project management arrangements reflective of the best country-specific practice, national capacities and donor requirements? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Is the governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriateness of structure of management arrangements Relevance and transparency of decision-making arrangements Extent of necessary partnership arrangements Level of participation of relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
mechanism effective for the meaningful engagement of project stakeholders?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are management and implementation arrangements efficient in delivering the outputs necessary to achieve outcomes? Is the quality of national execution sufficient for the smooth and transparent project implementation? Does UNDP provide quality support services to the Implementing Partner? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriateness of structure of management arrangements Extent of necessary partnership and management arrangements Level of management ownership and participation of relevant stakeholders Output-based project progress and delivery rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project national-level stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff Online interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project cost-effective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality and comprehensiveness of financial management procedures Project management costs share of total budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Finance data analyses Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the project implementation delayed? If so, did that affect cost-effectiveness? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project milestones in time Required project adaptive management measures related to delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is project workplanning timely, regular, effective, and results-based? Are the workplanning processes transparent and inclusive? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project milestones in time Timely and comprehensive workplans Stakeholder engagement for workplanning purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Key development stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Online interviews with key development stakeholders Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are expenditures in line with international standards and norms for development projects? Are appropriate financial controls in place? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of project inputs and outputs relative to norms and standards for donor projects in the country or region Annual audit observations and concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents (budget files, audit, etc.) Finance data analyses Project staff National stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation? Is project co-financing information verifiable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of cash and in-kind co-financing relative to expected level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff and co-financing partners Project co-financing reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the project leveraging additional resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of resources leveraged relative to project budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Interviews with project staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key risks and priorities for the remainder of the implementation period? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence, assessment of, and preparation for expected risks, assumptions and impact drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is adaptive management being applied to ensure effectiveness? Are the adaptive management changes being reported and shared with the Project Steering Committee? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified modifications to project plans, as necessary in response to changing assumptions or conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are project reporting requirements being met? Is monitoring and evaluation used to ensure effective decision-making? Are lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of project reporting (PIR ratings) Quality of M&E plan in terms of meeting minimum standards, conforming to best practices, and adequate budgeting Consistency of implementation of M&E compared to plan, quality of M&E products Use of M&E products in project management and implementation decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are project stakeholder engagement effort sufficient to ensure national ownership of the project results? Has public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of stakeholder engagement Impact of awareness-raising and capacity building activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Online questionnaire Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do government stakeholders support the project plans? Do they have an active role in project decision-making? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of initiative and engagement of relevant stakeholders in project activities and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is project communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results? Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of awareness and engagement of relevant stakeholders in project activities and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Online questionnaire Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
public awareness campaigns?)			
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are project results likely to be dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial requirements for maintenance of project benefits Level of expected financial resources available to support maintenance of project benefits Potential for additional financial resources to support maintenance of project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do relevant stakeholders have or are likely to achieve an adequate level of “ownership” of results, to have the interest in ensuring that project benefits are maintained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of initiative and engagement of relevant stakeholders in project activities and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do relevant stakeholders have the necessary technical capacity to ensure that project benefits are maintained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of technical capacity of relevant stakeholders relative to level required to sustain project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of socio-political risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the project results dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of institutional and governance risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of environmental risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online interviews Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?			

Annex 3. Unified Interview Protocol

Overview: The questions under each topic area are intended to assist in focusing discussion to ensure consistent topic coverage and to structure data collection, and are not intended as verbatim questions to be posed to interviewees. When using the interview guide, the interviewer should be sure to target questions at a level appropriate to the interviewee. The interview guide is one of multiple tools for gathering evaluative evidence, to complement evidence collected through document reviews and other data collection methods; in other words, the interview guide does not cover all evaluative questions relevant to the evaluation.

Key

Bold = GEF Evaluation Criteria

Italic = GEF Operational Principles

I. PLANNING / PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

A. **Relevance**

- i. Did the project's objectives fit within the priorities of the local government and local communities?
- ii. Did the project's objectives fit within national priorities?
- iii. Did the project's objectives fit GEF strategic priorities?
- iv. Did the project's objectives support implementation of the relevant multi-lateral environmental agreement?

B. *Incremental cost*

- i. Did the project create environmental benefits that would not have otherwise taken place?
- ii. Does the project area represent an example of a globally significant environmental resource?

C. *Country-drivenness / Participation*

- i. How did the project concept originate?
- ii. How did the project stakeholders contribute to the project development?
- iii. Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project?
- iv. Do the local communities support the objectives of the project?
- v. Are the project objectives in conflict with any national level policies?

D. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan / Design (*M&E*)

- i. Were monitoring and reporting roles clearly defined?
- ii. Was there either an environmental or socio-economic baseline of data collected before the project began?

II. MANAGEMENT / OVERSIGHT

A. Project management

- i. What were the implementation arrangements?
- ii. Was the management effective?
- iii. Were workplans prepared as required to achieve the anticipated outputs on the required timeframes?
- iv. Did the project develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?

- v. Were there any particular challenges with the management process?
 - vi. If there was a steering or oversight body, did it meet as planned and provide the anticipated input and support to project management?
 - vii. Were risks adequately assessed during implementation?
 - viii. Did assumptions made during project design hold true?
 - ix. Were assessed risks adequately dealt with?
 - x. Was the level of communication and support from the implementing agency adequate and appropriate?
- B. Flexibility**
- i. Did the project have to undertake any adaptive management measures based on feedback received from the M&E process?
 - ii. Were there other ways in which the project demonstrated flexibility?
 - iii. Were there any challenges faced in this area?
- C. Efficiency (*cost-effectiveness*)**
- i. Was the project cost-effective?
 - ii. Were expenditures in line with international standards and norms?
 - iii. Was the project implementation delayed?
 - iv. If so, did that affect cost-effectiveness?
 - v. What was the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation?
 - vi. To what extent did the project leverage additional resources?
- D. Financial Management**
- i. Was the project financing (from the GEF and other partners) at the level foreseen in the project document?
 - ii. Were there any problems with disbursements between implementing and executing agencies?
 - iii. Were financial audits conducted with the regularity and rigor required by the implementing agency?
 - iv. Was financial reporting regularly completed at the required standards and level of detail?
 - v. Did the project face any particular financial challenges such as unforeseen tax liabilities, management costs, or currency devaluation?
- E. Co-financing (*catalytic role*)**
- i. Was the in-kind co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?
 - ii. Was the cash co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?
 - iii. Did the project receive any additional unanticipated cash support after approval?
 - iv. Did the project receive any additional unanticipated in-kind support after approval?
- F. Monitoring and Evaluation (*M&E*)**
- i. Project implementation M&E
 - a. Was the M&E plan adequate and implemented sufficiently to allow the project to recognize and address challenges?
 - b. Were any unplanned M&E measures undertaken to meet unforeseen shortcomings?
 - c. Was there a mid-term evaluation?
 - d. How were project reporting and monitoring tools used to support adaptive management?
 - ii. Environmental and socio-economic monitoring
 - a. Did the project implement a monitoring system, or leverage a system already in place, for environmental monitoring?
 - b. What are the environmental or socio-economic monitoring mechanisms?

- c. Have any community-based monitoring mechanisms been used?
- d. Is there a long-term M&E component to track environmental changes?
- e. If so, what provisions have been made to ensure this is carried out?

E. Full disclosure

- i. Did the project meet this requirement?
- ii. Did the project face any challenges in this area?

III. ACTIVITIES / IMPLEMENTATION

A. Effectiveness

- i. How have the stated project objectives been met?
- ii. To what extent have the project objectives been met?
- iii. What were the key factors that contributed to project success or underachievement?
- iv. Can positive key factors be replicated in other situations, and could negative key factors have been anticipated?

B. Stakeholder involvement and public awareness (*participation*)

- i. What were the achievements in this area?
- ii. What were the challenges in this area?
- iii. How did stakeholder involvement and public awareness contribute to the achievement of project objectives?

IV. RESULTS

A. Outputs

- i. Did the project achieve the planned outputs?
- ii. Did the outputs contribute to the project outcomes and objectives?

B. Outcomes

- i. Were the anticipated outcomes achieved?
- ii. Were the outcomes relevant to the planned project impacts?

C. Impacts

- i. Was there a logical flow of inputs and activities to outputs, from outputs to outcomes, and then to impacts?
- ii. Did the project achieve its anticipated/planned impacts?
- iii. Why or why not?
- iv. If impacts were achieved, were they at a scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?
- v. If impacts or Global Environmental Benefits have not yet been achieved, are the conditions (enabling environment) in place so that they are likely to eventually be achieved?

D. Replication strategy, and documented replication or scaling-up (*catalytic role*)

- i. Did the project have a replication plan?
- ii. Was the replication plan “passive” or “active”?
- iii. Is there evidence that replication or scaling-up occurred within the country?
- iv. Did replication or scaling-up occur in other countries?

V. LESSONS LEARNED

- A. What were the key lessons learned in each project stage?
- B. In retrospect, would the project participants have done anything differently?

VI. SUSTAINABILITY

A. Financial

- i. To what extent are the project results dependent on continued financial support?
- ii. What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends?
- iii. Was the project successful in identifying and leveraging co-financing?
- iv. What are the key financial risks to sustainability?

B. Socio-Political

- i. To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors?
- ii. What is the likelihood that the level of stakeholder ownership will allow for the project results to be sustained?
- iii. Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
- iv. What are the key socio-political risks to sustainability?

C. Institutions and Governance

- i. To what extent are the project results dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance?
- ii. What is the likelihood that institutional and technical achievements, legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes will allow for the project results to be sustained?
- iii. Are the required systems for accountability and transparency and the required technical know-how in place?
- iv. What are the key institutional and governance risks to sustainability?

D. Ecological

- i. Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?

Annex 4. Project Finance and Co-financing Data

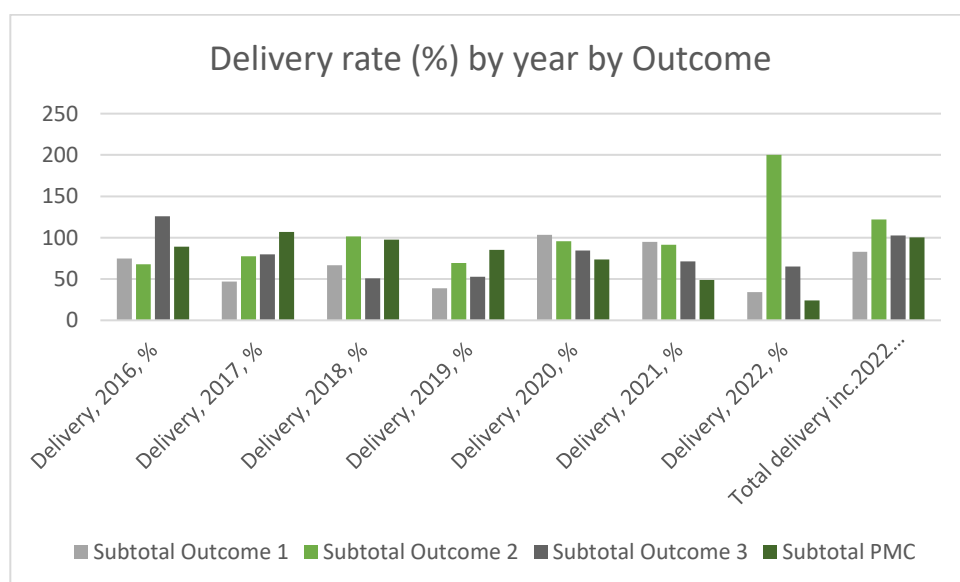
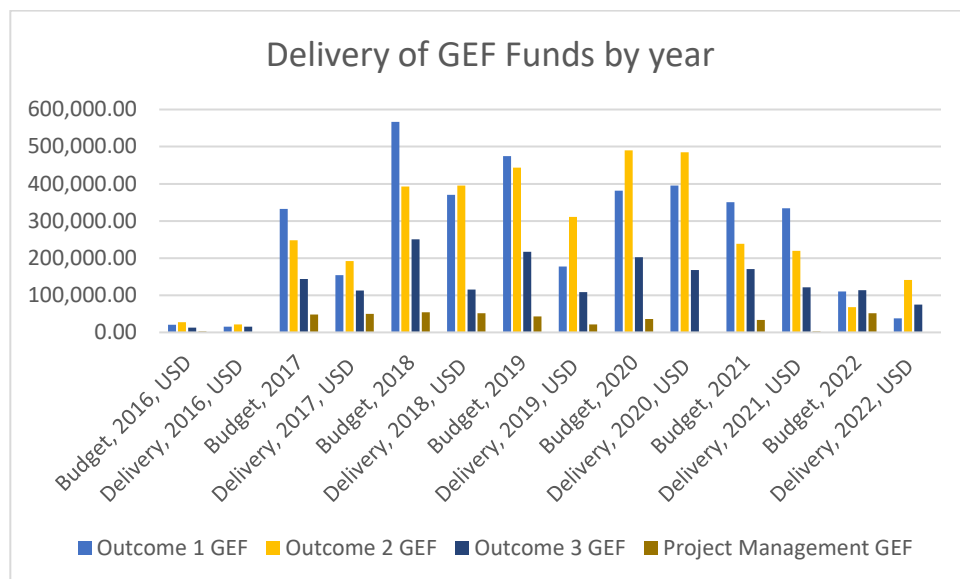
Sources of Co-finance	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement/Approval	Materialised co-financing as of June 30, 2022	% of Expected Amount	Investment Mobilised/Recurrent Expenditure; Nature of Co-financing Materialised
Recipient Government	National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center NBBC	Grant	2,500,000	2,837,520	105	NBBC staff time (part time Director and Accountant), office utilities, transport for the project logistics, participation of NBBC staff in project activities, project monitoring and reporting, liaison and coordination activities. Biodiversity research and monitoring, national policy and strategy development where relevant for the project, environmental awareness and outreach activities, forest restoration and high-altitude forest/pasture assessment
Recipient Government	National Biodiversity and Biosafety Center NBBC	In kind	200,000			
Recipient Government	Committee of Environmental Protection CEP	Grant	2,100,000	2,6500,000	115	Parallel co-financing from the Committee associated with the implementation of state programs, strategies and plans that were directly related to the conservation of high-altitude ecosystems of the snow leopard habitat and its food base. The cofinancing confirmation letter indicates one parallel project and construction of snow leopard rehabilitation center
Recipient Government	Committee of Environmental Protection CEP	In kind	200,000			
Recipient Government	Forestry Agency	Grant	2,000,000	2,000,000	100	The project worked directly with the local Forestry Management Units, therefore no co-financing directly from the Forestry Agency

Recipient Government	State Institution for Protected Areas	Grant				Parallel co-financing from the State Institution for Protected Areas was confirmed at USD 2,000,000. Co-financing was ensured for improved PA management effectiveness and enhanced monitoring and enforcement PA capacities.
GEF Agency	UNDP	In kind	6,000,000	6,000,000	100	Parallel projects in the field of relevance: UNDP project "Livelihood Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross-Border Areas", and UNDP project "Promoting cross-border cooperation through effective management of Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan".
CSO	Local Jamoats (Administrations)	In kind	1,200,000	1,400,000	117	In-kind co-financing by allocating land plots and facilities for demos and other project initiatives, workshops, communications etc.
Private Sector	Micro Loan Fund	Grant	1,500,000	1,200,000	80	Micro-finance entity "Faisy Surkhob", through small grants programme
Donor	Panthera	Grant	500,000	0	0	Panthera has terminated their activities in Tajikistan
GEF Agency	UNDP	Grant	440,000	419,655	95	UNDP TRAC as of July 21, 2022
Recipient Government	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	Grant	3,000,000	0	0	The cooperation with the MEDT was maintained indirectly, working with the subordinate institutions and organizations, as well as through implementing activities complementary to the relevant on-going programs and strategies of the Gov of Tajikistan.
Recipient Government	National Center for Environmental Protection Actions	In kind	0	200,000	n/a	Co-financing of relevant activities with local communities adjacent to PAs; pasture and forest rehabilitation monitoring

Recipient Government	National Academy of Science	In kind	0	2,150,000	n/a	Co-financing of relevant NAS activities related to species census, NAP preparation, etc. Also includes co-financing from the NAS Research Center for Ecology and Environment associated with the use of drones for remote census
Recipient Government	State Institution Research Laboratory for Nature Protection	In kind	0	150,000	n/a	Co-financing related to training for PA staff in monitoring of snow leopard ecosystems; community monitoring trainings; facilitation of relevant research meetings; aerial survey and census; trainings on GIS mapping
CSO	Local NGOs	In kind	0	673,750	n/a	Includes relevant activities of Hunters' Association (USD 23,750); NGO "Noosphera" (USD 250,000), Tagoba (USD 250,000), Tabiati Eboi (USD 150,000). Co-financing relates to the following main activities: Strengthening the capacity of environmental agencies to monitor and enforce and expand knowledge about the importance of conserving the ecosystems of the snow leopard and its hunting objects through awareness-raising activities and dissemination of knowledge. Development of training and educational programs to increase awareness and knowledge of employees of protected areas and local communities on the conservation of snow leopard ecosystems and its hunting objects. Scientific rationale and evaluation of activities and programs for sustainable snow leopard ecosystems, the practice of

						SLIM monitoring based on field work. Improving the ecological value and productivity of targeted high-altitude forests in the snow leopard habitat through: (1) encouraging the adoption of other fuel sources; (2) facilitating the implementation of agreements on joint forest management; (3) improving the condition of degraded forests.
Beneficiaries	Project Small Grants Recipients as co-financing of GEF investment	Cash	0	352,150	n/a	Direct cash co-financing of small grants
Recipient Government	Pasture Meliorative Trust	In kind	0	100,000	n/a	Parallel co-financing of activities related to control and monitoring of project work with and for Pasture User Unions, rehabilitation of degraded high-altitude pastures, regulation of cattle movement in order to avoid pasture degradation, sustainable pasture management, replication of project experience
Total			19,640,000	20,153,420	103	

Project finance charts



	Source of Funds	Prodoc Budget, USD	Actual budget, USD	Total delivery, USD	Total delivery, %
Outcome 1	GEF	1,890,657.00	1,890,657.00	1,556,496.11	82.3
	UNDP	71,000.00	74,103.91	71,078.56	95.9
Subtotal Outcome 1		1,961,657.00	1,964,760.91	1,627,574.67	82.8
Outcome 2	GEF	1,355,700.00	1,355,700.00	1,691,203.43	124.7
	UNDP	71,000.00	55,146.10	28,285.67	51.3

Subtotal Outcome 2		1,426,700.00	1,410,846.10	1,719,489.10	121.9
Outcome 3	GEF	735,900.00	735,900.00	755,258.23	102.6
	UNDP	71,000.00	73,364.70	74,355.91	101.4
Subtotal Outcome 3		806,900.00	809,264.70	829,614.14	102.5
Project Management	GEF	199,113.00	199,113.00	178,387.83	89.6
	UNDP	197,000.00	243,698.02	266,279.86	109.3
Subtotal PMC		396,113.00	442,811.02	444,667.69	100.4
Subtotal	GEF	4,181,370.00	4,181,370.00	4,181,345.60	100.0
Subtotal	UNDP	410,000.00	446,312.73	440,000.00	98.6
Project Total		4,591,370.00	4,627,682.73	4,621,345.60	99.9

Annex 5. Project Risk Log updated during the TE

IDENTIFIED RISKS AND CATEGORY	IMPACT	LIKELIHOOD	RISK ASSESSMENT	MITIGATION MEASURES
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	HIGH	MODERATELY LIKELY	MEDIUM	<p>As a signatory to the ‘Bishkek Declaration’ (October, 2013), the Government of Tajikistan (GoT) has resolved to ‘commit resources for (the) implementation’ (of the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection Program). It has further committed to act to ‘protect and recover snow leopard populations and their fragile habitats’. Thus, the ‘political will’ is already represented in these resolutions and commitments.</p> <p>The project will seek to significantly strengthen and expand the current capabilities of the key institutions¹⁴ that are directly responsible for the planning and management of protected areas, natural habitats, pastures and forests across the snow leopard range in Tajikistan. More specifically, it will assist in building capacities for well-trained and properly equipped management, monitoring, enforcement, community liaison and pastoral extension service staff in the targeted SPNAs, leshkhoz, border control points, khukumats and jamoats.</p> <p>The PMU and NBBC will, during the course of project implementation, ensure planning and implementation of capacity development activities with due account for sustainability of support and effectiveness for long-term perspective, including such beyond the term of the project.</p> <p><u>Updated risk status: This risk has manifested itself in several directions negatively</u></p>

¹⁴ This includes: the Department of Special Protected Natural Areas (Forestry Agency); the State Forest Institution (Forestry Agency); the Pasture Trust (Ministry of Agriculture); the Border and Customs Service; the CEP inspectorates within the *khukumats*; and the *jamoats*.

IDENTIFIED RISKS AND CATEGORY	IMPACT	LIKELIHOOD	RISK ASSESSMENT	MITIGATION MEASURES
				<p>impacting the project EoP target delivery, as follows.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The project work with the Sangvor refuge (IUCN category IV) was planned and implemented as capacity building increment to the effort of the Government to upgrade the status of the PA through its inclusion into the surrounding Sangvor section of the Tajik National Park. The Sangvor Refuge used to be subordinate to the PA Agency within the Agency for Forestry. After the governmental reform, the refuge remained under the Agency for Forestry while the PA Agency is now subordinate to the Committee for the Environment Protection. Before this change, the project prepared a package for transfer of the refuge. Such change should be agreed between the Forestry Agency and the Committee for Environmental Protection and authorized by a Decree of the Government. The project facilitated a series of dedicated consultations and meetings with the local administration, the Forestry Agency, the PA Agency and the Committee for Environmental Protection. Yet, according to the project Final Evaluation opinion which is based on the meetings with the principal stakeholders above, the likelihood of the zakaznik's transfer under a different management authority (i.e. from the Forestry Agency to the PA Agency subordinate to the

IDENTIFIED RISKS AND CATEGORY	IMPACT	LIKELIHOOD	RISK ASSESSMENT	MITIGATION MEASURES
				<p>Committee for the Environment Protection) is low.</p> <p>2. The project was designed to catalyse a better governmental investment into the PA estate. Yet, towards the end of the project, the increase in annual budget allocation for the management of protected areas is negligible and does not even come close to matching the high inflation rates in Tajikistan.</p> <p>3. The project was supposed to report on the approved and implemented National Action Plan for snow leopard conservation. Though several actions within this plan have been actually implemented with the support from the project, the plan was not approved by the Government.</p>
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.	HIGH	MODERATELY LIKELY	MEDIUM	<p>The project has adopted a three-pronged approach to addressing this risk.</p> <p><u>In the first instance</u>, while the widespread culture of impunity from environmental prosecution will not be fully reversed, the project will seek to improve the monitoring and enforcement capabilities across the snow leopard range. The project will specifically: pilot the implementation of a smart patrol system in Tajik NP with a vision to disseminate experience gained to other SPNAs in snow leopard range (Output 1.2 and 1.3); strengthen wildlife monitoring and enforcement capacities (knowledge, training, skills, equipment and staff) in the responsible state agencies (Output 2.3); pilot the training, equipping and deployment of a corps of local community rangers (Output 2.3); and build the capacity of border and customs officials to</p>

IDENTIFIED RISKS AND CATEGORY	IMPACT	LIKELIHOOD	RISK ASSESSMENT	MITIGATION MEASURES
				<p>improve the detection of illegal wildlife trade (Output 3.2).</p> <p><u>In the second instance</u>, the project will seek to incentivise an incremental shift to more sustainable land use (focused on grazing and forest use) practices. The project will specifically: facilitate the economic beneficiation (employment, contractual work, provision of services, income, etc.) of communities living around SPNAs in return for a reduction of load on mountain ecosystems (Output 1.4); help village governments to plan, source funding for and implement alternative livelihoods (Output 1.4); provide technical and financial grant support to pastoralists in return for a shift to more sustainable pasture management practices (Output 2.1); and provide small grants to assist rural communities and local governments to install alternative fuel and energy technologies in return for a reduction in harvesting of wood for fuel and energy needs from forests (Output 2.2).</p> <p><u>In the third instance</u>, the project will seek to improve the awareness of rural communities living in the snow leopard range of the importance of conserving snow leopard, their prey and their habitats. The project will specifically: develop and implement an education and awareness programme around Tajik NP (Output 1.4); strengthen the knowledge and awareness of sustainable pasture management in the PUUs (Output 2.1); strengthen the knowledge and awareness of sustainable forest management (Output 2.2); present informational materials and displays on alternative fuel and energy technologies (Output 2.2); and conduct an ecosystem services and economic valuation of</p>

IDENTIFIED RISKS AND CATEGORY	IMPACT	LIKELIHOOD	RISK ASSESSMENT	MITIGATION MEASURES
				<p>snow leopard and their mountain ecosystems (Output 3.2).</p> <p><u>Updated risk status:</u> The project has successfully applied the risk management approach indicated above. The monitoring and enforcement capacities have been enhanced, while the sustainable grazing and forest use practices have been demonstrated and embedded in the regulations (Pasture Law, Management Plans for Pasture User Unions, Forest Management and restoration best practices disseminated through Participatory Forest Management Committees). KM and awareness activities have been implemented as planned. It is impossible for the project to reverse the widespread culture of impunity from environmental prosecution. However, the PA statistics shows very positive dynamics in the number of poaching and other illegal (encroachments for crops and grazing, wood harvesting) incidents recorded. The sustainable use practices and restoration options for the high-altitude pastures and forests have been successfully tested with the involvement of local communities and local administrations who are now both aware and equipped to go on with the models introduced by the project. The risk measures supported by the project made it possible mitigate this risk, and there are both regulatory and institutional capacities to sustain the current trends.</p>
Low levels of coordination and cooperation between public institutions, tenure holders, rights holders, land owners, NGOs/CBOs and natural resources users leads to conflicts over any changes in use rights in SPNAs and high altitude pastures and forests	MODERATE	MODERATELY LIKELY	MEDIUM	<p>The project is building on almost a decade of cooperation with communities and local and regional authorities in the implementation of biodiversity conservation initiatives under the framework of a UNDP-GEF-CEP/NBBC partnership. This work suggests that a high level of engagement and local ownership</p>

IDENTIFIED RISKS AND CATEGORY	IMPACT	LIKELIHOOD	RISK ASSESSMENT	MITIGATION MEASURES
				<p>among local stakeholders will be maintained in this project, with careful attention given to stakeholder consultation.</p> <p>The project will work closely with the administration of the targeted SPNAs, <i>leskhoz</i>, <i>khukumats</i>, <i>jamoats</i> and <i>dehas</i> in ensuring the effective involvement of all affected stakeholders in the implementation of project activities.</p> <p>The project will also act in collaboration with local coordinating structures, Pasture User Unions (PUUs) and Participatory Forest Management (PFM) committees as an institutional mechanism to improve the communication, collaboration and cooperation between tenure holders, rights holders, natural resource users and the relevant state, regional and local administrations.</p> <p>The project will also strengthen the knowledge and skills base of protected area, pasture and forest users and managers in order to facilitate a more collaborative approach in the planning, implementation and enforcement of sustainable forest and pasture management practices.</p> <p><u>Updated risk status:</u> the project Implementing Partner (NCBB) and its key stakeholders spared no effort to establish the required level of engagement, ownership over project endeavors and remain fully engaged through the institutional mechanisms supported by the project (Pasture User Unions (PUUs) and Participatory Forest Management) as the project support phases out. As confirmed by the project Final Evaluation, the risk did not materialize.</p>
The increasing aridisation of high altitude habitats, as a result of the effects of climate change, results in more intensive		UNLIKELY	LOW	The effects of climate change are likely to exacerbate the effects of the existing threats to snow leopard, their prey and their habitats.

IDENTIFIED RISKS AND CATEGORY	IMPACT	LIKELIHOOD	RISK ASSESSMENT	MITIGATION MEASURES
and extensive grazing pressures on high altitude pastures, potentially leading to the local extirpation of snow leopard and medium-sized prey.				<p>They are however not likely (under current climate change scenarios) to result in the emergence of new, potentially catastrophic threats.</p> <p>The project has thus adopted a landscape-scale approach, with a strong emphasis on maintaining viable and secure movement corridors between formal protected areas.</p> <p>The project will also support the finalisation of the <i>National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation in Tajikistan</i> (Output 3.2), which will include activities on mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change.</p> <p><u>Updated risk status:</u> The long-term climate change effects did not significantly affect the project performance and achievement of the EoP targets. The project successfully introduced the necessary regulatory changes and modelled best practices for sustainable management of high-altitude pasture and forests in the changing climate. The project supported the discussion and agreement on the final draft of the National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation in Tajikistan, which includes long-term measures on mitigation and adaptation to the effects of climate change.</p>
Complex global and regional trends of financial crises 2015-2016 affected the national banking system of Tajikistan, that became particularly apparent in key systemically important bank branches across the country. This caused difficulties in non-cash extremely limited circulation of financial resources for organizations, and cash, which may limit the possibility of non-cash financing of a considerable volume of project activities, primarily in the project areas. In this	HIGH	VERY LIKELY	MEDIUM	<p>The government of the country implements an active policy of supporting banks. New strategies for systemically important banks guarantee the gradual normalization of complex situations arisen.</p> <p>Various types of cooperation will be undertaken to ensure effective performance of the project, and optimal financing forms and options will be selected, especially for project areas. In addition, in the practice of supporting local communities, procurement scenarios will be developed for different packs of materials</p>

IDENTIFIED RISKS AND CATEGORY	IMPACT	LIKELIHOOD	RISK ASSESSMENT	MITIGATION MEASURES
connection, there is a risk of difficulties in executing financial procedures during cooperation with partners and beneficiaries.				and goods during the process of purchasing and equipping in order to optimize and reduce the risk. <u>Updated risk status:</u> The risk did not materialize during the project lifetime.
<p>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.</p> <p>In addition, compliance with technological requirements for the functioning of the program (satellite communication channel, 24-hour online ubiquitous communication with tracking points, etc.) cannot be provided in the targeted project areas. The complex of all equipment for SMART patrolling is also tied to the software and cannot be replaced or reprogrammed to adapt to the conditions of the country. This complicates the long-term effect of the project after it is completed, since there is a high risk of ensuring the following maintenance of all technological equipment of the SMART system.</p>	MODERATE	VERY LIKELY	MEDIUM	<p><u>Risk Management Response:</u> The SMART patrol system will form the basis for the development / adaptation of existing databases, on which basis the data processing software will be selected and the system of processing data adapted to national environment monitoring system will be created. The special team will work to adapt or develop software to manage the data system.</p> <p><u>Updated risk status:</u> SMART anti-poaching system has been developed by an international provider (NextGIS) and fully adapted to the conditions of Tajikistan. The original Next GIS software was reprogrammed to adapt to the conditions of the country. The open source code for the software has been transferred to the project implementing partner, an option for creation of new modules was added, and a possibility for data input in Tajik is there. The system has been tested and is in operation. Indeed, not all options of the SMART patrolling system, as was confirmed by the TE, are currently in use by the PAs. However, the system does work to inform the management of the PAs, the PA Agency, and is integrated with the database of the Committee for the Environmental Protection. SMART patrolling system operation trainings were conducted for the rangers of individual PAs, PA Agency staff and other relevant</p>

IDENTIFIED RISKS AND CATEGORY	IMPACT	LIKELIHOOD	RISK ASSESSMENT	MITIGATION MEASURES
				stakeholders. The risk has been successfully mitigated.
COVID pandemic	MODERATE	VERY LIKELY	MEDIUM	<p><u>Risk Management Response:</u> Shift a number of N interventions into online mode where possible; expand activities through project partners, including on-site works, request project extension to ensure finalization of activities planned.</p> <p><u>Updated risk status:</u> The risk materialised, however, the management response was sufficient to minimize the impact on the project performance. While the project “international” dimension (Outcome 3) suffered most and many of the plans did not materialize, overall, thanks to the outstanding effort of the project team and partners the project has overcome the risk and delivered the majority of its outputs and declared impacts.</p>

Annex 7. Project Steering Committee attendance record

Year	Full Name	Position	Organization	Status
2016	04.11.2016			
	Olimjon Yatimov	Director	Project Implementing Partner (NBBC)	Member (Chairman as per the rotation procedure rule)
	Khurshed Kholov	Manager of Energy and Environment Programme, National Coordinator of Small Grants Programme	UNDP Tajikistan	Member
	Rakhmatullo Khayrulloev	Director of Department	Committee for Environmental Protection	Member
	Madibron Saidzoda	Director	State Institution for Protected Areas, Forestry Agency	Member
	Firuz Raufi	Representative	NGO "Noosfera"	Member
2017	29.11.2017			
	Sanja Bojanic	Deputy Country Director	UNDP Tajikistan	Member (Chairman as per the rotation procedure rule)
	Olimjon Yatimov	Director	NBBC	Member
	Mukhamadali Mirzoev	Specialist of the Flora and Fauna Department	Committee for Environmental Protection	Member
	Fayzali Khakimov	Director	Institute for Zoology and Parasitology under the Academy of Sciences	Member
	Firuz Raufi	Member of NGO "Noosfera"	NGO "Noosfera"	Member
2018	9.11.2018			
	Olimjon Yatimov	Director	NBBC	Member (Chairman as per the rotation procedure rule)
	Nargizkhon Usmanova	Team Leader on CC, DRR and E&E	UNDP Tajikistan	Member
	Mukhammadali Mirzoev	Specialist of the Flora and Fauna Department	Committee for Environmental Protection	Member
	Komil Saidov	Researcher	Institute for Zoology and Parasitology under the Academy of Sciences	Member
	Madina Mirakova	Representative	NGO "Noosfera"	Member

	18.12.2018			
	Sanja Bojanic	Deputy Country Director	UNDP Tajikistan	Member (Chairman as per the rotation procedure rule)
	Olimjon Yatimov	Director	NBBC	Member
	Mukhammadali Mirzoev	Specialist of the Flora and Fauna Department	Committee for Environmental Protection	Member
	Zayniddin Amirov	Researcher	Institute for Zoology and Parasitology under the Academy of Sciences	Member
	Madina Mirakova	Representative	NGO "Noosfera"	Member
24.05.2019				
2019	Mukhammadali Mirzoev	Director of Department	Committee for Environmental Protection	Member (Chairman as per the rotation procedure rule)
	Sanja Bojanic	Deputy Resident Representative	UNDP Tajikistan	Member (Co-Chair)
	Olimjon Yatimov	Director	NBBC	Member
	Fayzali Khakimov	Director	Institute for Zoology and Parasitology under the Academy of Sciences	Member
	Mehrangez Niyozova	Representative	NGO "Noosfera"	Member
	25.12.2019			
	Rahmatullo Khayrulloev	Director of Department	Committee for Environmental Protection	Member (Chairman as per the rotation procedure rule)
	Christophoros Politis	Deputy Resident Representative	UNDP Tajikistan	(Member) Co-Chair
	Olimjon Yatimov	Director	NBBC	Member
	Abdusattor Saidov	Vice President	National Academy of Sciences of the Tajikistan	Member
	Mehrangez Niyozova	Representative	NGO "Noosfera"	Member
03.12.2020				
2020	Abdusattor Saidov	Vice President	National Academy of Sciences of the Tajikistan	Member (Chairman as per the rotation procedure rule)
	Christophoros Politis	Deputy Resident Representative	UNDP Tajikistan	Member (Co-Chair)
	Rakhmatullo Khayrulloev	Director of Department	Committee for Environmental Protection	Member

	Olimjon Yatimov	Director	NBBC	Member
	Madina Izatullozoda	Representative	NGO "Noosfera"	Member
	12.07.2021			
2021	Abdusattor Saidov	Vice President	National Academy of Sciences of the Tajikistan	Member (Chairman as per the rotation procedure rule)
	Christophoros Politis	Deputy Resident Representative	UNDP Tajikistan	Member (Co-Chair)
	Firuz Raufi	Scientific Secretary	Committee for Environmental Protection	Member
	Olimjon Yatimov	Director	NBBC	Member
	Madina Izatullozoda	Representative	NGO "Noosfera"	Member
	23.12.2021			
	Abdusattor Saidov	Vice President	National Academy of Sciences of the Tajikistan	Member (Chairman as per the rotation procedure rule)
	Christophoros Politis	Deputy Resident Representative	UNDP Tajikistan	Member (Co-Chair)
	Turakul Murodov	Head of Project Implementation Group	Committee for Environmental Protection	Member
	Olimjon Yatimov	Director	NBBC	Member
	Mehrangez Niyozova	Representative	NGO "Noosfera"	Member
	23.05.2022			
2022	Turakul Murodov	Head of the Center for Implementation of Investment Projects	Committee for Environmental Protection	Member (Chairman as per the rotation procedure rule)
	Muhiba Rabejonova	Team Leader on Climate Change a.i.	UNDP Tajikistan	Member (Co-Chair)
	Olimjon Yatimov	Director	NBBC	Member
	Abdusattor Saidov	Vice President	National Academy of Sciences of the Tajikistan	Member
	Mehrangez Niyozova	Representative	NGO "Noosfera"	Member

Annex 8. TE Interview Summary Table

Meeting date and venue	Meeting Summary
Principal meetings in Dushanbe	
TE orientation meeting with the Project Implementing Partner, NBBC, July 18, 2022	<p>IP mandate and role for the project. Project implementation arrangements. Project processes run by the IP. IP as a liaison to the Committee for Environmental Protection of the Government of Tajikistan. Project performance assessment on behalf of the IP. UNDP oversight and monitoring. LOA for UNDP support services. Project efficiency, delivery, finance management. IP's key role in mobilizing best available expertise and capacity in the country where it concerns BD conservation, SLM and other relevant aspects. "Side" activities such PA website, database maintenance, creation of an herbarium for the purposes of assessing the state of ecosystems, etc. Key "aggregator" function and resource center for the SMART patrolling system and its connection to the governmental databases.</p> <p>Project risks and issues. Project operational closure and associated constraints. Project co-financing verification. Sustainability and scale-up aspects.</p>
National Academy of Science Meeting with Dr. Abdusattor Saidov, Vice-President, July 19, 2022	<p>NAS role and mandate for the project. Work of the project Steering Committee. Project design and inception. Issues with the National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation. Assessment of snow leopard presence in the country: how reliable are the data reported by the project? Specific issues related to snow leopard conservation worldwide, conflict with humans, availability of prey. Value of the project work and data for trophy hunting that is actively developing in the country. International cooperation, GSLEP.</p>
NGO Tagoba, meeting with Mr. Khaidar Rizoyev and Mr. Tukhtosh Khushbakov, July 19, 2022	<p>Community monitoring and wildlife population assessment. Gender aspects. Engagement of khukumats and jamoats in trainings and other activities with the local communities. Cooperation with SGP, sustainability of the alternative energy solutions (cheap solar panels). Incentives for the local communities and the administrative resource at the local level.</p>
Pasture Meliorative Trust Meeting with Mr. Nazarali Safarov, Director, July 20, 2022	<p>Role and mandate of the Pasture Meliorative Trust. Project value for the Pasture Users Unions. Metodology for restoration of degraded pastures: applicability, replicability, scale-up. Capacity building activities for PUU. Pasture management plans for 10 PUUs – project increment, role of the local administrations, capacity to implement the management plans. Monitoring of project impact on pastures. Law on Pastures as a regulatory mechanism for sustainability.</p>
PA Agency under the Committee for Environmental Protection Meeting with Mr. Nadjimiddin Nadjimiddinov, Deputy Director, responsible for	<p>Management effectiveness increment for Sangvor and Laksh sections of the Tajik National Park. Resources to sustain the capacities developed by the project. Application of smart patrolling, possibility for scale-up. METT assessment. PA finance picture. Catalytic role of the project increment in speeding up planned technical capacity building (incl.construction). Baseline capacity needs assessment and corrective assessment after MTR. PA management planning. Monitoring, control, enforcement capacities. Wildlife monitoring opportunities and technical</p>

the Tajik NP, July 20, 2022	requirements. Sustainability of PA capacity building increment. Sangvor refuge issue.
State Forestry Agency Meeting with Mr. Davlatali Sharipov, Deputy Director, July 20, 2022	Role and mandate for the project before and after the governmental reform of 2022. Issue with the Sangvor refuge. Project work with the local forestry management units (leskhozes). Sustainability of impact achieved together with the local Forestry Management Committees.
UNDP CO Meeting with the Programme Manager, M&E focal point, and UNDP DRR in Tajikistan July 22, 2022	Preliminary findings of the TE. Exit plan for the project, unfinished actions and commitments. UNDP implementation and execution support role for the project. Project management arrangements, functioning of the Steering Committee, work of the Implementing Partner and liaison to the key project stakeholders. Project communication, stakeholder engagement and outreach. Monitoring and reporting, HACT audit and spot-checks, other M&E aspects. Project team performance and project staffing issues. Interaction with the Project Implementing Partner with a vision for the upcoming GEF-7 project and GEF-8 project scoping.
State Committee for Environmental Protection (GEF National Focal Point) Meeting with Mr. Turakul Murodov, project SC member, Head of the Project Coordination Center, July 22, 2022	Project implementation arrangements. Role and assessment of the IP's performance and value for the GEF portfolio in the country. NBBC's reporting to the Committee, the GEF OFP role for the project monitoring and supervision. Functioning of the project Steering Committee. Project impact and sustainability. Project increment for the National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation, the way forward with the plan's adoption. Value of the GEF increment for the construction and capacitation of the Snow Leopard rehabilitation center in Murgab. NBBC as a principal institutional mechanism for the project sustainability: Central Asian countries' agreement for Snow Leopard Conservation and NBBC's role in its implementation; SMART patrolling system maintenance and linkage to the Committee's database; Inter-agency discussions of Sangvor refuge transfer and justification package. Assessment of UNDP implementation and execution support, expectations for the GEF-7 and GEF-8.
Meetings during the field trip	
Shamsiddin Shohin district Meeting with Mr. Rustam Safarov, Secretary of the administration of the Shurabad jamoat, July 27, 2022	Project cooperation with the administration of the Shurabad jamoat SGP: construction of a shed, restoration of pastures and forests by providing trees and seedlings for planting; in-kind (area and administrative resource for the SGP and project trainings) co-financing from the jamoat. Capacity building: training workshops, awareness and behavioral change trainings aimed to improve the attitude of the local community to natural resources and strengthen the activity of communities, with a focus on women and youth.
Shamsiddin Shohin district Meeting with Mr. Saydali Nazirov, Head of the NGO "Saodat", July 27, 2022	Visit to the construction of a shed for animals of the NGO "Saodat" within the framework of the SGP project. The project contributed to the construction of a shed, which can simultaneously accommodate more than 600 heads of small cattle and about 200 heads of big cattle. For more than 5 years, local residents have been actively using this shed for livestock, which as a result has greatly affected the reduction of conflicts between humans and wild animals, in particular, the snow leopard. Relevant capacity building and trainings

Shamsiddin Shohin district Meeting with Mr. Umar Kamarzoda, Chairman of the Shurabad jamoat, July 27, 2022	Pasture management and implementation of pasture management plans. The contribution of SGP to the economic and social condition of the people. Further cooperation with the project as well as the impact of small grants on the development of jamoats.
Shamsiddin Shohin district Meeting with Mr. Mahmudjon Ahmadzoda, Director of the Dashtijum Forestry Department, July 27, 2022	Cooperation with the project and sustainability of results. Capacity building to improve and sustain high-altitude pastures: seeds of rare and medicinal plants, field equipment, tents, clothing and gear and safety equipment. Reforestation and restoration of forests.
Shamsiddin Shohin district Meeting with Mr. Ismoil Fayzov, Head of the Dehkan Farm "Khojiyon-2011", July 28, 2022	After the project held a number of introductory and training workshops in the area, Ismoil Fayzov applied for a small grant for the construction of a shed for livestock within the framework of the SGP. The results of this small grant greatly contributed to the improvement of human relations with wildlife, especially with the snow leopard. Since this territory is the habitat of the snow leopard and its prey, there have often been cases of attacks by snow leopards on livestock, which as a result led to the hunting of the local population for an endangered species of animal. To date, almost 15 families use this shed for the maintenance of their livestock. A dwelling for a shepherd is attached to this shed, now a family of 7 people lives there, who look after and graze cattle, and get paid for it. This shed accommodates more than 800 heads of small cattle, and residents of nearby villages bring their cattle for keeping in the shed. Ismoil Fayzov noted that over 20 families benefit from this project.
Shamsiddin Shohin district Meeting with Mr. Gairat Nazriev, Head of the Dehkan Farm "Gairatali", July 28, 2022	Capacity building for restoration of pasture lands and forests by planting forest and fruit crops, as well as sowing seeds of fodder crops corresponding to the territory of the district. At the moment, work is underway to fence the territory. Several places have been designated for holding ditches. After the implementation of the project, the state of forest and pasture ecosystems will improve, productivity will increase and the state of forests and pastures will improve, as well as awareness of farms and forestry employees at the local level will increase. Scale-up effect: this pilot encourages other farms to participate in these initiatives and expands the activity of land users to other territories of the jamoat.
Shamsiddin Shohin district Meeting with Mr. Tolibjon Yoramadov, Head of the NGO "Dashtijum Jamoat Support Center", July 28, 2022	This SGP project is aimed at restoring forest ecosystems and pasture lands of the Dashtijum jamoat of Shamsiddin Shohin district. Due to the annual overrun of livestock in the amount of 100 thousand heads from the southern regions of Tajikistan, degradation of pastures and forests is observed in the high-altitude pastures of the Shamsiddin Shohin district. This, in turn, affects the state of natural ecosystems, reduces the food supply of wild ungulates and, in particular, the migration of animals to other territories, which accordingly affects the habitat of the snow leopard. During the project, 3 hectares of pasture lands and 12 hectares of forest ecosystems were restored by planting forest and fruit crops, as

	<p>well as sowing seeds of fodder crops. The benefits will be associated with the improved state of forest and pasture ecosystems, increased productivity, increased awareness of farms and forestry employees. Scale-up effect: the land users involved in the implementation of the project encourage other farms to participate in these initiatives and expand their activity to other territories of the jamoat. 143 people, 58 of them women, benefit directly from the implementation of the project and 170 people indirectly, 65 of them women.</p>
<p>Muminabad district Meeting with Mr. Saidakbar Jalolzoda, Head of the Agriculture Departement of Muminabad didstrict, July 29, 2022</p>	<p>Project support in the sustainable life of communities and local BD conservation. The project provided a considerable number of rare species of trees. As part of the SGP co-financing, over 40 gardens were fenced to preserve the fruits and seeds of rare plants. A lot of forestry work has been carried out in this area. To date, forestry still uses the seeds and fruits of the trees that were presented by the project.</p>
<p>Muminabad district Meeting with Mr. Jyonkhon Zulfiev, Head of the NGO "Rushdi Shurobod", July 29, 2022</p>	<p>Shamsiddin Shohin district is one of the few high-altitude areas of the country where wild animals live, such as the screw-horned goat, bears, wolves, snow leopard and other animals. According to Jyonkhon Zulfiev, Head of the NGO "Rushdi Shurobod", the SGP project for the construction of a shed and pasture management contributed to reducing the risk of conflicts between humans and wild animals, in particular, snow leopards, when attacking livestock. As part of the project, a shed and a small house for shepherds were built. This shed holds about 450 heads of small cattle. A small house is used by a shepherd for rest, overnight accommodation and storage of necessary things during the cattle drive. Measures were implemented to rehabilitate pasture lands on the territory of the farm. Relevant information materials (booklets and brochures) on methods of rehabilitation of pasture lands in the highlands were distributed. As a result of the constructed shed and pasture rehabilitation measures, the risk of wild animals attacking livestock has been reduced, thereby minimizing the risk of human conflict with wild animals, in particular, with a leopard. The natural ecosystems of the mountainous territories of the Shamsiddin Shohin district have been restored, and the food base for wild ungulates has been improved. 48 people, 18 of them women, directly benefited from the implementation of the project and indirectly 70 people, 20 of them women.</p>
<p>Muminabad district Meeting with Mr. Abdulnazar Boboev, Head of the Dehkan Farm "Zamburparvari", July 30, 2022</p>	<p>Abdulnazar Boboev began his story about the field of activity that covers his farm, this is cattle breeding, gardening and beekeeping. He noted that if it were not for the project, nothing would have been left of his garden, since the territory was open and other people's cattle constantly penetrated his lands. But thanks to the project, he was able not only to fence 8 hectares of land, but also to create a new garden, where he planted more than 2,000 almond and cherry trees, and also conducted 3 km of pipes from the water source to his farm and adapted it to the drip irrigation system. He is very grateful to the project for the assistance provided and looks forward to further cooperation.</p>
<p>Muminabad district</p>	<p>Cooperation of the NGO "Muminabad Entrepreneurship Development Center" with the project, as well as efficiency and sustainability within</p>

Meeting with Mr. Jomi Safarov, Head of the NGO “Muminabad Entrepreneurship Development Center”, July 30, 2022	<p>the framework of the SGP. 200 Carpathian bee colonies adapted to local climatic conditions were purchased, as well as the necessary equipment and accessories for beekeeping, and all this was transferred to 20 households. Through interviews, it was revealed that 107 people, 42 of them women, were directly involved in the implementation of the project, 250 people, 100 of them women, also indirectly benefited from the implemented initiatives, in general, the project covered more than 20 households in the Muminabad district. Benefits: profitability of local communities and farmers has increased, the number of environmental products in local markets has significantly increased. By itself, the increase in the number of bee colonies in this area has affected the improvement of biodiversity, in particular the pollination of pasture plants and the improvement of crop yields. During the implementation of the project, local residents, farmers, young people and especially girls and women have developed a broad knowledge of beekeeping methods and an understanding of the importance of ecosystem conservation.</p>
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Annex 9. List of Documents Reviewed

GEF Project Information Form (PIF)
Project Document and CEO Endorsement Request
Inception Report
Annual Work Plans
Annual Project Reports (PIRs and annual reports to the Steering Committee/key institutional partners)
Atlas Risk Log update
Midterm Review Report (MTR)
Management response to MTR (latest update)
Project budget revisions
CDRs
NIM audit reports
Project Steering Committee Meeting minutes
Links to project products and other evidence used for the latest PIR
Project co-financing reporting for analysis and verification
Project extension request memo
Tracking Tools: METT, LD PMAT, SFM Tracking Tool
Draft National Action Plan for Snow Leopard Conservation

Annex 10: Summary list of SGP projects

No.	Activities	Performance indicators	Comments on sustainability, replicability and scale-up potential	Direct beneficiaries	Total amount of funds (in USD)
2017					
1	Restoration of degraded forest ecosystems in the habitat of the snow leopard: Reforestation activities on an area of 4 hectares on the territory of Nurabad district in the Komsomolabad jamoat, Sangigarak gorge	Restored degraded forests and pastures; Improved soil and biodiversity; Reduction of the burden on ecosystems, changes in the system of land use and land management.	<p>Forest ecosystems have been restored on an area of 4 hectares by planting seedlings of forest crops. Together with representatives of the local community and the jamoat, a plan for the phased restoration of forest ecosystems has been developed, local types of tree and shrub vegetation have been selected, water supply works to the land plot have been completed, and a plan for outreach and information activities for the local community, NGOs and other stakeholders has also been developed.</p> <p>The restored forests and access to NTFP had a positive impact on the local communities directly benefited from NTFP collection - fruits and nuts both for personal use and for further sale. As an indirect effect outreach and information activities, the felling of trees decreased, which previously had a strong impact on the ecological condition of both this territory and the region as a whole. The restoration also positively affected the forage base, the migratory wildlife, the process of soil degradation and erosion has decreased, as well as the risk of natural disasters.</p>	100 people, of which 50 women	22216

2	Construction of a shed and management of pasture lands in snow leopard ecosystems on the territory of the Shurabad Jamoat of the Sh. Shohin district	<p>A shed is built for 300-450 heads of small and large cattle, and a small house for shepherds.</p> <p>Activities for the rehabilitation of pasture lands on the territory of the dehkan farm. The risk of wild animals attacking livestock during grazing and parking is reduced, thereby minimizing the risk of human conflict with wild animals, in particular with a leopard.</p> <p>The natural ecosystems of the mountainous territories of the Shamsiddin Shohin district have been restored, and improved food supply for wild ungulates.</p>	<p>As part of this project, the dehkan farm has built one shed with a size of 40 x 5, which accommodates 300-450 heads of small and large cattle, and a fenced enclosure without a roof for walking cattle has also been built on the front of the shed. A tray for watering animals is built at the entrance to the aviary. A small house has also been built for shepherds where they can relax, cook their own food and spend the night if necessary. The shed promotes the safety of cattle from wild animals and reduces the risk of conflicts between humans and wild animals.</p> <p>Taking into account the fact that the territory of the farm occupies 1.2 hectares, in some areas activities have been conducted to rehabilitate pasture lands, by sowing alfalfa seeds, watering pastures, and other measures that contribute to the restoration of pasture lands.</p> <p>The impact of this project was primarily aimed at reducing the load of cattle grazing on the pasture lands of the Shamsiddin Shohin district, improving the management of pasture lands of the farm. The implemented activities made it possible to reduce the risks of human conflicts with snow leopard. The control of livestock grazing, in turn, influenced the increase in the grazing area of wild ungulates, which are the main feeding objects of the snow leopard.</p> <p>The results of the grant project for the restoration of degraded pasture lands contributed to the improvement of high-altitude pastures in snow leopard ecosystems.</p> <p>The socio-economic benefit of this project was the preservation of wild animals, which in turn increased the economic benefit of the parties involved in the implementation of this project and local residents whose cattle graze on the farm. Local residents of the jamoat are also provided with permanent and temporary work, they receive an appropriate salary and thereby increase the income of their households.</p> <p>The achieved results of the project made it possible to replicate the experience and skills gained in other project territories that are also snow leopard ecosystems. Also in the future, the farm plans to expand the area of pastures and attract more households to implement the planned initiatives.</p>	48 people, of which 18 women	70293
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3	Improvement of forest areas to ensure a viable snow leopard population in Baljuvan district	<p>1. Planted area 40 hectares;</p> <p>2. Survival rate of seedlings;</p> <p>3. Forest productivity;</p> <p>4. Raising awareness among educational institutions (schoolchildren) of the jamoat and improving the socio-economic situation of the local population.</p>	<p>Forest ecosystems have been restored by the method of growing forest crops and further spreading the experience gained to other territories. The result of the projects is improved state of forest ecosystems and fruit forests on the territory of Baljuvan district and increased forest productivity, increased awareness of dehkan farms and forestry employees at the local level.</p> <p>Seedlings of forest species and fruit crops were planted on 18 hectares of forest territory. Reforestation activities have been carried out on an area of 18 hectares.</p> <p>The restored degraded forest territories have made it possible to improve the ecological situation of forests located in the vicinity of settlements and reduce the environmental burden on forest ecosystems. The improvement of the ecological situation also affected the state of the biodiversity of the district and the region. The condition of the snow leopard's food base has improved.</p> <p>The restoration of forest areas has increased the productivity of forests, which has affected the socio-economic well-being of the local population. The collection of fruits and berries by the local population both for personal use and for sale has increased the economic well-being of the local population. The increase in the level of economic well-being of the local population has served for a more careful attitude to forest ecosystems as a source of additional income.</p> <p>Providing temporary and in some cases permanent jobs for local residents helped to increase the social sustainability of both the project itself and the administration of the jamoat. Local schoolchildren were involved in the implementation process, which also increased the social sustainability of the project.</p>	Direct - 110 of them 60 women	12364
4	Restoration and rehabilitation of high-altitude pastures, which are ecosystems of the snow leopard, reduction of biodiversity loss in the jamoat of Sarikhosor of Baljuvan district	<p>Sowing alfalfa and restoring the ecosystem on an area of 15 hectares;</p> <p>Increasing the quantity and quality of livestock products through the introduction of a seasonal grazing system;</p> <p>Obtaining additional feed;</p> <p>Improving the well-being of the members of the village of Sarikhosor.</p>	<p>As a result of the project activities, pastures have been restored on an area of 15 hectares by sowing fodder crops. A seasonal grazing system was developed and implemented with members of the local jamoat community, eliminating overgrazing and degradation of pastures. Winter snow retention, along with fertilization of flood meadows helped revitalisation of hayfields that will be a source of winter stocks of coarse feed.</p> <p>The project contributed to the promotion and popularization of effective technologies, which will significantly reduce the rate of degradation of pastures and improve the ecological condition. The introduction of new technologies to restore pastures and improve forest ecosystems has reduced the ecological burden of the ecosystem, which is often manifested in places with insufficient electricity supply. Due to the lack of energy resources, local residents harvest firewood. By promoting information and introducing technologies into the life of local settlements, the project helped to mitigate the impact. The knowledge, skills and best practices that farmers received during the implementation of the project are aimed at long-term and sustainable benefits for local households from the rational use and conservation of local biodiversity.</p>	Direct - 50 of them, 20 women	21187
Total 2017					126060

2018					
5	Restoration of forest ecosystems in the Tagi Siyahkuh tract by planting fruit-bearing and forest (walnut, almond, etc.) trees on the territory of the dehkan farm "Gairatali" of the Dashtijum jamoat	<p>Purchase of adapted seedlings of genetic resources of fruit and forest trees;</p> <p>Planting of fruit and forest seedlings of tested and grafted varieties adapted to local climatic conditions;</p> <p>Carrying out agrotechnical measures of the forest area;</p> <p>Conducting information events among the local population about the importance of forest ecosystems and ways to restore them;</p> <p>Dissemination of experience in the restoration of forest ecosystems among other dehkan farm jamoat;</p>	<p>Degraded forest ecosystems have been restored by planting fruit and forest tree and shrub plants with the broad involvement of local communities. That strengthened the mountain slopes and soil, protected from erosion and degradation of forest ecosystems. The initiative of the farm to restore forest ecosystems has awakened other farms, local authorities and the local community to further continue the initiative to restore forest ecosystems and expand activity. The awareness of the local community about the value of forest ecosystems and wildlife at the local level has increased.</p> <p>In general, the implementation of the project affected the improvement of the ecological situation of the region, reduced the risk of degradation and deforestation of mountain slopes, which also reduced the level of landslides and mudflows. The restoration of forest ecosystems has helped preserve the valuable local genetic wealth of local fruit crops.</p> <p>The most important priority of this project was to increase the well-being of the local population, reduce poverty and reduce unemployment among local residents, DF "Gairatali" and household representatives involved in the project implementation process were provided with seasonal and permanent jobs. The profits from their activities have helped to improve the well-being of the local population and their family members.</p> <p>Regarding gender aspects, 3 women participated directly in the implementation of the project and more than 20 women were involved indirectly. The involvement of women in the implementation of the grant project is due to the fact that the main economic activity in mountain villages is carried out by women and young people, this is due to the labor migration of men. Given this factor, that most men go to work outside the country, the participation of women in the implementation of project initiatives takes an important place.</p> <p>The experience and skills gained were duplicated in other adjacent jamoats and districts, which are also included in the list of snow leopard habitats and its feeding facilities. Workshops, trainings, meetings with the participation of DF members and household representatives with practical examples on the conservation and restoration of forest ecosystems are held and will be conducted to disseminate experience and skills.</p>	Direct-10 of them 3 women	10000

6	Construction of a koshar (paddock) and a small house for distilling cattle to reduce conflict situations between humans and wild animals in Shamsiddin Shohin district	<p>A shed is built for 400-500 heads of small and large cattle, and a small house for shepherds.</p> <p>Activities for the rehabilitation of pasture lands on the territory of the dehkan farm. The risk of wild animals attacking livestock during grazing and parking is reduced, thereby minimizing the risk of human conflict with wild animals, in particular with a leopard.</p> <p>The natural ecosystems of the mountainous territories of the Shamsiddin Shohin district have been restored, and improved food supply for wild ungulates.</p>	<p>As part of this project, the dehkan farm has built one shed with a size of 12 x 21, which accommodates 400-500 heads of small and large cattle, and a fenced enclosure without a roof for walking cattle has also been built on the front of the shed. A tray for watering animals is built at the entrance to the aviary. A small house has also been built for shepherds where they can relax, cook their own food and spend the night if necessary. The shed promotes the safety of cattle from wild animals and reduces the risk of conflicts between humans and wild animals.</p> <p>Taking into account the fact that the territory of the farm occupies 20 hectares, in some areas activities have been conducted to rehabilitate pasture lands, by sowing alfalfa seeds, watering pastures, and other measures that contribute to the restoration of pasture lands.</p> <p>All the activities implemented within the framework of this project have any impact on both local communities and nature in general. The impact of this project was primarily aimed at reducing the load of cattle grazing on the pasture lands of the Shamsiddin Shohin district, improving the management of pasture lands of the farm. The implemented activities made it possible to reduce the risks of human conflicts with wild animals, in this case with a snow leopard. The control of livestock grazing, in turn, influenced the increase in the grazing area of wild ungulates, which are the main feeding objects of the snow leopard.</p> <p>The implementation of the grant project initiatives was related to the achievement of global environmental goals. At the global level, the results of the grant project for the restoration of degraded pasture lands contributed to the improvement of high-altitude pastures in snow leopard ecosystems.</p> <p>The socio-economic benefit of this project was the preservation of wild animals, which in turn increased the economic benefit of the parties involved in the implementation of this project and local residents whose cattle graze on the farm. Local residents of the jamoat are also provided with permanent and temporary work, they receive an appropriate salary and thereby increase the income of their households.</p> <p>The achieved results of the project made it possible to duplicate the experience and skills gained in other project territories that are also snow leopard ecosystems. Also in the future, the farm plans to expand the area of pastures and attract more households to implement the planned initiatives.</p>	Direct-10 of them 4 women	32838
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7	Construction of a shed and a small house for shepherds in the ecosystems of the snow leopard in Sangvor district	<p>A shed is built for 450-500 heads of small and large cattle, and a small house for shepherds.</p> <p>Activities for the rehabilitation of pasture lands on the territory of the dehkan farm. The risk of wild animals attacking livestock during grazing and parking is reduced, thereby minimizing the risk of human conflict with wild animals, in particular with a leopard.</p> <p>The natural ecosystems of the mountainous territories of the Shamsiddin Shohin district have been restored, and improved food supply for wild ungulates.</p>	<p>As part of this project, the dehkan farm has built one shed with a size of 40 x 5, which accommodates 450-500 heads of small and large cattle, and a fenced enclosure without a roof for walking cattle has also been built on the front of the shed. A tray for watering animals is built at the entrance to the aviary. A small house has also been built for shepherds where they can relax, cook their own food and spend the night if necessary. The shed promotes the safety of cattle from wild animals and reduces the risk of conflicts between humans and wild animals.</p> <p>Taking into account the fact that the territory of the farm occupies 10 hectares, in some areas activities have been conducted to rehabilitate pasture lands, by sowing alfalfa seeds, watering pastures, and other measures that contribute to the restoration of pasture lands.</p> <p>All the activities implemented within the framework of this project have any impact on both local communities and nature in general. The impact of this project was primarily aimed at reducing the load of cattle grazing on the pasture lands of the Shamsiddin Shohin district, improving the management of pasture lands of the farm. The implemented activities made it possible to reduce the risks of human conflicts with snow leopard. The control of livestock grazing, in turn, influenced the increase in the grazing area of wild ungulates, which are the main feeding objects of the snow leopard.</p> <p>The results of the grant project for the restoration of degraded pasture lands contributed to the improvement of high-altitude pastures in snow leopard ecosystems.</p> <p>The socio-economic benefits from the project are related to better management of cattle grazing on the farm. Local residents of the jamoat are also provided with permanent and temporary work, they receive an appropriate salary and thereby increase the income of their households.</p> <p>The farm plans to expand the area of pastures and attract more households to implement the planned initiatives.</p>	Direct - 11 of them 3 women	36005
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8	Introduction and use of renewable energy source: Reducing the negative impact on the environment and climate change by providing access to renewable energy sources and raising public awareness on the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency for the population of the villages of Hawza and Safedob of the Dashtijum jamoat of Shamsiddin Shokhin district	Equiped secondary schools in the village of Hawza and the village of Safedob with an alternative energy source with photovoltaic solar systems to ensure uninterrupted power supply to schools and computer classes. Equiped medical center in the village of Safedob with an alternative source of energy with photovoltaic solar systems Conducted theoretical and practical trainings on the manufacture of homemade solar water heaters and raised public awareness of the use of renewable energy and EE.	<p>The negative impact on the environment and climate change was reduced by providing access to renewable energy sources and raising public awareness about the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency for the population of the villages of Hawza and Safedob of the Dashtijum jamoat of Shamsiddin Shohin district.</p> <p>The project has contributed to ensuring access to energy for everyday needs, and in the long term to reducing the negative impact on the environment and climate change. From an environmental point of view, the project has had an impact on reducing deforestation.</p> <p>From a socio-economic point of view, the project has had an impact on reducing household spending, including time for collecting and purchasing firewood and coal.</p> <p>The local population of the district has not had access to electricity for many years and renewable energy sources, mostly self-made, were the main source of energy. The project thus influenced the sustainable livelihood of the local population. Access to electricity and hot water from the use of solar energy has made it possible to significantly change the life of the population and contribute to quality services in the field of medicine and education of children.</p> <p>The trainings provided by the project allowed to have a greater impact on the formation of public environmental awareness. Practical examples allowed us to see the effect of using renewable energy sources.</p> <p>Since the local potential for the manufacture of solar water heaters was created, which was affordable and efficient, was demanded by the local population and trained specialists will be able to manufacture such systems at the request of neighbors, which will fuel business development.</p> <p>Gender dimension was ensured by involving women in all activities. At least 50% of women were directly involved in all stages of the project. The availability of electricity and hot water from solar systems has made it possible to significantly change the houselife of women.</p> <p>The project is replicable for the neighboring villages of the district or beyond.</p>	Direct – 287 people, of which 140 women	41514
Total 2018					120356
2019					

9	<p>Demonstration of alternative means of renewable energy sources and energy-efficient technologies in the village of Mehron, Mastchohi Kuhiston district: Establishment of a demonstration site in a social institution boarding school of the village of Mehron with the formation and equipment of a mini-workshop for the assembly of solar water heaters, as well as training of 10 local residents of the village of Rogif in the methods of assembly and maintenance of solar water heaters</p>	<p>Installed two solar water heaters for 200 and 500 liters in a boarding school, to provide hot water for shower rooms and a dining room. Created and equipped mini-workshop for the assembly and maintenance of solar water heaters. Trained 10 people, including 5 women of the village of Rogif, in the practical assembly of solar water heaters. Raised awareness of the local population about energy-efficient technologies and their popularization in order to reduce pressure on the environment.</p>	<p>A demonstration site was established in a municipal boarding school of the village of Mehron with the creation and equipment of a mini-workshop for the assembly of solar water heaters, 10 local residents of the village of Rogif were also trained in the methods of assembly and maintenance of solar water heaters. The project has contributed to ensuring access to energy for everyday needs, and in the long term to reducing the negative impact on the environment and climate change. From an environmental point of view, the project has had an impact on reducing deforestation. From a socio-economic point of view, the project has had an impact on reducing household spending, including time for collecting and purchasing firewood and coal. The local population of the district has not had access to electricity for many years and renewable energy sources, mostly self-made, were the main source of energy. The project thus influenced the sustainable livelihood of the local population. Access to electricity and hot water from the use of solar energy has made it possible to significantly change the life of the population and contribute to quality services in the field of medicine and education of children. The trainings provided by the project allowed to have a greater impact on the formation of public environmental awareness. Practical examples allowed us to see the effect of using renewable energy sources. Since the local potential for the manufacture of solar water heaters was created, which was affordable and efficient, was demanded by the local population and trained specialists will be able to manufacture such systems at the request of neighbors, which will fuel business development. Gender balance in the project was ensured by involving women in all activities. At least 20% of women were directly involved in all stages of the project. Moreover, given that women spend more time within households. The availability of electricity and hot water from solar systems has made it possible to significantly change the life of women. Replication of the project will occur due to the achieved effect. Considering that the population lives practically in isolation, various kinds of innovations are rapidly spreading among residents. Therefore, The project is replicable for the neighboring villages of the district or beyond.</p>	Direct-508 people, 262 of them women	52123
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10	Construction of a shed and a small house for distilling cattle to reduce conflict situations between humans and wild animals in Shamsiddin Shohin district	<p>A shed is built for 450-500 heads of small and large cattle, and a small house for shepherds.</p> <p>Activities for the rehabilitation of pasture lands on the territory of the dehkan farm. The risk of wild animals attacking livestock during grazing and parking is reduced, thereby minimizing the risk of human conflict with wild animals, in particular with a leopard. The natural ecosystems of the mountainous territories of the Shamsiddin Shohin district have been restored.</p>	<p>As part of this project, the dehkan farm has built one shed with a size of 21 x 12, which accommodates 400-600 heads of small and large cattle, and a fenced enclosure without a roof for walking cattle has also been built on the front of the shed. A tray for watering animals is built at the entrance to the aviary. A small house has also been built for shepherds where they can relax, cook their own food and spend the night if necessary. The shed promotes the safety of cattle from wild animals and reduces the risk of conflicts between humans and wild animals.</p> <p>Taking into account the fact that the territory of the farm occupies 10 hectares, in some areas activities have been conducted to rehabilitate pasture lands, by sowing alfalfa seeds, watering pastures, and other measures that contribute to the restoration of pasture lands.</p> <p>This project was primarily aimed at reducing the load of cattle grazing on the pasture lands of the Shamsiddin Shohin district, improving the management of pasture lands of the farm. The implemented activities made it possible to reduce the risks of human conflicts with snow leopard. The control of livestock grazing, in turn, influenced the increase in the grazing area of wild ungulates, which are the main feeding objects of the snow leopard.</p> <p>The results of the grant project for the restoration of degraded pasture lands contributed to the improvement of high-altitude pastures in snow leopard ecosystems.</p> <p>The socio-economic benefit of this project is associated with the improved management of cattle grazing on the farm. Local residents of the jamoat are also provided with permanent and temporary work, they receive an appropriate salary and thereby increase the income of their households. The farm plans to expand the area of pastures and attract more households to implement the planned initiatives.</p>	Direct-8 people, including 3 women	39472
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11	Restoration of degraded pastures on an area of 6 hectares and forest ecosystems on an area of 4 hectares in the snow leopard habitat in the Dashtijum jamoat of the Shamsiddin Shohin district	4 hectares of forest ecosystems have been restored in the Dashtijum jamoat; 6 hectares of pasture lands have been restored in the Dashtijum jamoat; More than 60 people, including 25 women, are aware of the importance of forest ecosystems and pasture lands and restoration methods.	<p>Degraded pastures on an area of 6 hectares and forest ecosystems on an area of 4 hectares in the snow leopard habitat in the Dashtijum jamoat of the Shamsiddin Shohin district have been restored through the introduction of pasture turnover, sowing of fodder crops, agrotechnics of pasture lands, fencing of restored pasture lands, as well as agrotechnical measures to restore forest ecosystems, planting of forest vegetation (fruit and ornamental trees and shrubs) and information and educational activities among the local community of the jamoat Dashtijum.</p> <p>The project contributed to the promotion and popularization of effective technologies in different regions of the country, which will significantly reduce the rate of degradation of pastures and lands and improve the ecological condition.</p> <p>The introduction of new technologies to restore pastures and improve forest ecosystems in the life of the population has reduced the ecological burden of the ecosystem, which is often manifested in places with insufficient electricity supply. Due to the lack of energy resources, local residents harvest firewood by cutting down the trees. By promoting information and introducing technologies into the life of local settlements, the project helped to mitigate the impact of the anthropogenic process on the natural environment, in particular in the area of the snow leopard.</p> <p>Through the implementation of SGP activities and with additional financial support, the farm will have more opportunities for the efficient and rational use of pasture and forest resources, which in turn will serve not only the development and benefits, but also the preservation and improvement of the state of unique natural ecosystems. The knowledge, skills and best practices that farmers received during the implementation of the project are aimed at long-term and sustainable benefits for local households from the rational use and conservation of local biodiversity.</p>	Direct - 25 of them 5 women	34010
Total 2019					125605
2020					

12	Restoration of forest ecosystems in the floodplain of the Vanj River and their further conservation as a habitat for wild animals in Vanj district	<p>Restored 15 hectares of the forest ecosystem of wild fruit and berry woody shrub vegetation.</p> <p>8 thousand saplings of woody and shrubby vegetation were planted.</p> <p>Strengthening the capacity of local specialists, representatives of dehkan farms, public organizations, local authorities and other stakeholders about the value, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the environment in general.</p> <p>Improving the socio-ecological well-being of the local population.</p>	<p>15 hectares of the forest ecosystem of wild fruit and berry woody shrub vegetation has been restored by planting 8 thousand of sea buckthorn, rosehip, barberry and other fruit and medicinal plants. The forest ecosystems of the floodplain of the Vanch River have been restored and their further preservation as a habitat for wild animals that directly depend on the rational use of natural resources by the local population, as well as awareness and knowledge of the local population in the field of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity has been increased.</p> <p>The volume of the average yield of fruit and berry crops in the restored territory has been calculated, for collection and further use as a source of additional income by the local population. The restored forest ecosystems of the floodplain of the Vanj River are assigned to individual groups of people and thereby ensure constant monitoring by the population for rational and sustainable use of natural resources.</p> <p>More than 50 people from among local residents, representatives of the jamoat, youth and other stakeholders were involved in the implementation of the project.</p> <p>The project contributed to the promotion and popularization of effective technologies in different regions of the country, which will significantly reduce the rate of degradation of pastures and lands and improve the ecological condition.</p> <p>The introduction of new technologies to improve forest ecosystems in the life of the population has reduced the ecological burden of the ecosystem, which is often manifested in places with insufficient electricity supply. Due to the lack of energy resources, local residents harvest firewood. By promoting information and introducing technologies into the life of local settlements, the project helped to mitigate the impact of the anthropogenic process on the natural environment, in particular in the area of the snow leopard.</p> <p>Through the implementation of SGP activities and with additional financial support, the farm will have more opportunities for the efficient and rational use of pasture and forest resources, which in turn will serve not only the development and benefits, but also the preservation and improvement of the state of unique natural ecosystems. The knowledge, skills and best practices that farmers received during the implementation of the project are aimed at long-term and sustainable benefits for local households from the rational use and conservation of local biodiversity.</p>	Direct: 21, of which, 6 women	15000
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13	Improving the state of forest ecosystems and fruit forests in the Shamsiddin Shohin district	<p>Purchase of grafted and adapted seedlings of fruit crops;</p> <p>Laying a garden of fruit crops of tested and grafted varieties adapted to local climatic conditions;</p> <p>Fencing of the territory of forest plantations;</p> <p>Raising public awareness of the importance of forest ecosystems and their restoration;</p> <p>Dissemination of experience among other dehkan farms of the Shamsiddin Shohin district and adjacent areas;</p> <p>Monitoring of the state of protection of forest resources and control of pests and diseases of forests;</p> <p>Maintenance of forest plantations and sanitary selective logging;</p> <p>Gentrification of the restored forest area.</p>	<p>The state of forest ecosystems and fruit forests in the Shamsiddin Shohin district has been improved to increase forest productivity, reduce conflicts between domestic and wild animals, and raise awareness of dehkan farms and forestry employees at the local level. The example of land users participating in the project implementation has prompted other farms to participate in these initiatives and expand their activity in other territories of the jamoat and the district.</p> <p>With the support and implementation of the project, 5 people were provided with seasonal work. 15 hectares of forest areas have been restored. The restored forest area has improved the condition of the forest ecosystems of the highlands. Restored forest ecosystems have helped prevent degradation and erosion of mountain landscapes. The number of wild mountain ungulates has increased due to an increase in the forage base of forest ecosystems.</p> <p>The resulting harvest of fruit crops, adapted local tree crops helped to improve the socio-economic condition of the dehkan farm and its members. The profit received from the sale of the harvest (fruit) was spent on further expansion of forest ecosystems, improving the well-being of the local population.</p> <p>Activities were carried out to raise awareness and awareness of the local population, dehkan farms, vulnerable segments of the population, youth and women about forest ecosystems and methods of their restoration.</p> <p>A great contribution to the development of agro-entrepreneurship and the provision of local markets with local high-quality and environmentally friendly fruits.</p>	Direct – 50 people, of which 15 women	60340
14	Restoration of forest ecosystems by planting forest crops in the natural forest territories of the Shamsiddin Shohin district	<p>Reforestation activities using innovative planting methods;</p> <p>Conducting information and educational activities for the conservation and rational use of forest ecosystems and forest products;</p> <p>Conservation activities of forest ecosystems, control of pests and diseases of forests;</p> <p>Conducting trainings, consultative meetings and study tours to exchange experience and expand the area of restored territories.</p>	<p>The state of forest ecosystems, which mainly consist of fruit crops, has been improved, forest productivity has also been increased, conflicts between domestic and wild animals have decreased, awareness of dehkan farms and forestry employees at the local level has been increased.</p> <p>Sustainable land use and increased the level of socio-economic well-being of local communities involved in the implementation of the project activities, an exchange of experience and skills was carried out to disseminate the results and improve the forest ecosystems of the Shurabad jamoat and Shamsiddin Shohin district as a whole. The total area of the restored forest ecosystems is more than 12 hectares located on the territory of the Shurabad jamoat, Shamsiddin Shohin district. More than 25 people from among the members of dehkan farms and other stakeholders have been trained in new methods of reforestation.</p>	Direct – 32 people, of which 12 women	40500

15	Development of beekeeping in the jamoat of Chagam, district Shamsiddin Shohin, Khatlon region: Support of local dehkan farms by providing them with 10 bee colonies for the resumption of beekeeping in remote mountain villages of the Chagam jamoat of Shamsiddin Shohin district	Purchase of bee colonies for distribution to dehkan farms; Distribution of bee colonies to dehkan farms and conducting training on the basics of beekeeping for members of dehkan farms and other stakeholders; Monitoring and control over proper beekeeping; Carrying out agrotechnical measures for processing bee colonies; Honey collection and honey production; Collection and packaging of beekeeping products to obtain a certificate of conformity/quality; Conducting workshops, trainings, study tours and other events among the local population of the Chagam jamoat and nearby jamoats to exchange and expand the experience gained.	<p>800 cells of bee colonies were provided to local dehkan farms. Beekeeping is developing in the mountainous area as one of the priority areas of agriculture that contributes to obtaining an additional source of profit for local dehkan farms and the local population as a whole. Also, within the framework of the project, certification of the obtained honey and bee products was carried out for sale on local and international markets. One of the priorities of this project was to improve biodiversity and environmental conditions affecting not only the production of bee products, but also changes in consumer demand of buyers of bee products. Based on this, a peculiar approach was applied to the process of implementing the project in the organization of the production of beekeeping products, depending on the influence of environmental factors.</p> <p>To increase the competitiveness of beekeeping products in price competition, a number of measures were used that were aimed at reducing all costs in the field from production to the final consumer. Therefore, advanced technologies and methods of this sphere have been introduced into the production and sale of beekeeping products.</p> <p>In a market economy, the demand for beekeeping products is increasing, which requires the expansion of production of various types of products in this industry. Based on this, some researchers dealing with this problem characterize the sale of beekeeping products as: "a form of commodity-money relations between producers and consumers of honey, wax, propolis and pollen."</p> <p>The environmental sustainability of the project is aimed at improving the state of the flora, where pollinating insects such as bees play an important role. The pollination process favourably contributes to the stability of plants and their development.</p> <p>Within the framework of the project, specialists and scientists were involved in the process of conducting workshops, trainings and other informational events, during which representatives of dehkan farms received additional knowledge and skills in beekeeping and the development of small and medium-sized businesses based on beekeeping.</p>	Direct – 235 people, of which 85 women	55600
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16	CSustainable local livelihoods and improvement of the range and quality of services in the field of eco and agrotourism in the jamoat of Sari Khosor, Baljuvan district	<p>Increase the level of environmental knowledge of the local community and train them to guide skills and specifics of communication with tourists;</p> <p>To attract local residents to the cultivation of gardening and beekeeping;</p> <p>Promotion of ecotourism in Baljuvan district and expansion of the range of services for tourists through the organization of the statehome.</p>	<p>The local community became aware of the protection and preservation of the biodiversity of the flora and fauna of the Baljuvan district, the habitat of rare animals and the conservation of the Snow Leopard (100 people from among the local residents);</p> <p>20 people from among the local residents were trained in the skills of an eco-guide and an agro-guide;</p> <p>25 people are trained in the specifics of the development of the horticulture industry;</p> <p>25 people are trained in the stages of beekeeping breeding and apply the knowledge in practice;</p> <p>15 women and 10 men from among the local residents are employed, thanks to the new model garden created;</p> <p>More than 2000 people received information about the unique nature of Sari Khosor, the habitat of the Snow Leopard, cartography and the location of tourist sites in this area, (through the distribution of the newsletter and the electronic version, which was posted on tourist sites);</p> <p>A stayhome was organized in 10 households, thereby mutual benefits were established, both for tourists and for selected households;</p> <p>The flow of tourists has increased due to the placement of information about the possibilities of the statehome in Baljuvan district on websites that provide information about services for tourists;</p> <p>Tourists will post stories about staying at the stayhome in Baljuvan district on their pages in social networks, thereby increasing trust and interest in the nature of Tajikistan.</p> <p>This initiative has a positive impact on the local livelihoods and the development of sustainable tourism businesses in the country.</p> <p>Sustainable livelihoods are associated with the green jobs, profit and new opportunities for development.</p> <p>Due to the frequent visits of ecotourists, the promotion of the profession of eco and agro guides among the local population, the ecological awareness of the population, the preservation of the values of nature and biological diversity of the region will be sustained.</p> <p>More than 60% of the beneficiaries of the project were women from among the local residents.</p> <p>This initiative was presented in the tourism departments of Khatlon region and at the republican level, as well as among travel companies, in order to promote the two selected areas of excursion activities.</p>	Direct - 155 people, of which 100 women	57912
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17	Restoration of degraded forest ecosystems by planting fruit and berry tree and shrub vegetation in Dashtijum jamoat	<p>Purchase of seedlings of woody and shrubby vegetation;</p> <p>Purchase of metal mesh for fencing woodlands;</p> <p>Care of planted seedlings on the territory of the DF "Komron";</p> <p>Carrying out agrotechnical measures of the forest area;</p> <p>Conducting information activities among the local population about the importance of forest ecosystems and ways to restore them;</p> <p>Dissemination of experience in the restoration of forest ecosystems among other DF of jamoat;</p>	<p>From 5 to 20 local residents are provided with permanent or seasonal work.</p> <p>Fence posts (metal mesh) were installed to promote the restoration and preservation of forest ecosystems, the stability of local varieties of fruit crops adapted to local climatic conditions, reducing land degradation, ensuring sustainable land use.</p> <p>The state of forest ecosystems has been improved, an additional food base has appeared for wild animals living in this tract, which in turn will reduce the migration process.</p> <p>The well-being of the local population living in the vicinity of the tract has been improved due to the collection and sale of wild fruit crops (fruits).</p> <p>Increased awareness and awareness of the value and significance of forest ecosystems, local types of genetic resources of fruit and forest ecosystems.</p> <p>A favorable environment and conditions have been created for the development of eco-tourism among both the local population and foreign tourists.</p> <p>The land plot intended for carrying out reforestation measures amounted to 6.2 hectares. including 3.2 hectares of pastures.</p> <p>In general, the implementation of the project has improved the ecological situation of the region, reduced the risk of degradation and deforestation of mountain slopes, which will also reduce the level of landslides and mudflows. Restoration of forest ecosystems will help preserve the valuable local genetic wealth of local fruit crops.</p> <p>At the global level, the preservation of valuable genetic resources of forest ecosystems and fruit crops will help to increase the food supply for wild animals and reduce their migration to other areas.</p> <p>2 women participated directly in the implementation of the project and more than 7 women were involved indirectly. The involvement of women in the implementation of the grant project is due to the fact that the main economic activity in mountain villages is carried out by women and young people, this is due to the labor migration of men. Given this factor, that most men go to work outside the country, the participation of women in the implementation of project initiatives is not unimportant.</p>	Direct: 5, of which, 2 women	8400
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18	To restore degraded pasture lands by building a shed and a watering hole for distilled cattle, and a small house for rest and overnight accommodation for shepherds, to preserve the ecosystems of the snow leopard in Baljuvan district	<p>Construction of a shed and a watering hole for small and large cattle with a capacity of 100-150 heads to protect against attacks by wild animals.</p> <p>Construction of a small house for rest and overnight accommodation of shepherds during cattle stops.</p> <p>Development of measures for the phased rehabilitation of pasture lands on the territory of the farm.</p> <p>Dissemination of the experience gained in the rehabilitation of pasture lands to other pasture territories that are ecosystems of the snow leopard.</p> <p>Preparation and distribution of information booklets and brochures on methods of rehabilitation of pasture lands in the highlands of the Baljuvan district.</p>	<p>A shed (koshara) and a watering hole for 100-150 heads of small and large cattle, and a small house for shepherds were built.</p> <p>Measures have been taken to rehabilitate pasture lands on the territory of the dehkan farm.</p> <p>The risk of wild animals attacking livestock during grazing and parking is reduced, thereby minimizing the risk of human conflict with wild animals, in particular with a leopard.</p> <p>The natural ecosystems of the mountainous territories of the Baljuvan district have been restored, and the food base for wild ungulates has been improved.</p> <p>As part of this project, the dehkan farm has built one shed with a size of 80 x 100, which accommodates 80-100 heads of small and large cattle, and a fenced enclosure without a roof for walking cattle has also been built on the front of the shed. A tray for watering animals is built at the entrance to the aviary. A small house has also been built for shepherds where they can relax, cook their own food and spend the night if necessary. The shed promotes the safety of cattle from wild animals and reduces the risk of conflicts between humans and wild animals.</p> <p>Taking into account the fact that the territory of the farm occupies 1,2 hectares, in some areas activities have been conducted to rehabilitate pasture lands, by sowing alfalfa seeds, watering pastures, and other measures that contribute to the restoration of pasture lands.</p>	Direct – 18 people, of which 10 women	12800
19	Construction of a shed to reduce the risk of conflict with wild animals in the Shurobod jamoat of Shamsiddin Shohin district	<p>Construction of a shed for distilled cattle with a capacity of 400-500 heads to protect against attacks by wild animals.</p> <p>Construction of a small house for rest and overnight accommodation of shepherds during cattle stops.</p> <p>Activities for partial rehabilitation of pasture lands in the vicinity of shed.</p> <p>Dissemination of the experience gained in reducing the risk of conflicts between humans and wild animals.</p> <p>Preparation and distribution of information booklets and brochures on implemented events.</p>	<p>A shed was built for 400-500 cattle, and a small house for shepherds.</p> <p>Activities have been conducted to rehabilitate pasture lands in the vicinity of shed on the territory of the dehkan farm.</p> <p>The risk of wild animals attacking livestock during grazing and parking is reduced, thereby minimizing the risk of human conflict with wild animals, in particular with a leopard.</p> <p>The natural ecosystems of the mountainous territories of the Shurabad jamoat of the Shamsiddin Shohin district have been restored.</p> <p>As part of this project, the dehkan farm has built one shed with a size of 20 x 10, which accommodates 400-500 heads of small and large cattle, and a fenced enclosure without a roof for walking cattle has also been built on the front of the shed. A tray for watering animals is built at the entrance to the aviary. A small house has also been built for shepherds where they can relax, cook their own food and spend the night if necessary. The shed promotes the safety of cattle from wild animals and reduces the risk of conflicts between humans and wild animals.</p> <p>Taking into account the fact that due to labor migration, the male population of the district is leaving and the time for farming falls on the shoulders of women, the farm attracted women to the implementation of the grant project. In general, about 10-12 people from among local residents, including 4-8 women, were involved in the implementation of the project.</p>	Direct – 8 people, of which 3 women	37950

20	Development of beekeeping in the territory of the dehkan farms of the Sangvor and Vahdat jamoats of the Sangvor district and conducting training and workshops with the involvement of specialists and veterinarians on the methods of proper beekeeping	Purchase of 600 bee colonies and transfer to 20 households in Sangvor and Vahdat jamoats of Sangvor district. The Carpathian breed of bees will be purchased, which are adapted to local climatic conditions and resistant to diseases and viruses in the conditions of the Sangvor district. Conducting training workshops on methods of proper beekeeping, combating bee diseases with the involvement of local specialists and veterinarians. Purchase of necessary equipment and accessories for beekeeping.	<p>As a result of the project, local residents, farmers, and especially young girls and women have developed a broad knowledge of beekeeping methods</p> <p>The incomes of local communities and farmers and the development of local markets for clean ecological products have increased</p> <p>The state of biodiversity has improved, in particular the pollination of pasture plants and the yield of agricultural crops has improved</p> <p>The activity of communities, especially women and youth, in the preservation of the ecosystem, the understanding and feeling of the importance of preserving high-altitude pastures has increased. The attitude of the local community to natural resources has changed for the better, high-altitude pastures are being restored as one of the key habitats of the snow leopard and other species of wild animals.</p> <p>Carpathian bee colonies were purchased for 20 households. 20 households are provided with equipment for the development of beekeeping. 20 households or 120 people were trained in the methods of proper beekeeping. More than 120 people, 90 of them women, have been trained in methods of combating bee diseases and viruses.</p> <p>The development of beekeeping is an important direction for increasing the incomes of local communities and ensuring food security. Realizing the profitability and sustainability of this direction, local communities and farmers will expand their activities in this direction and get a steady income and improve their standard of living.</p> <p>Farmers and households will present their products at exhibitions and fairs selling agricultural crops. The sale of bee products on local markets will allow farmers and households to improve their budget and socio-economic level.</p>	Direct – 210 people, of which 90 women	43259
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21	Development of horticulture through traditional types of fruit crops and restoration of degraded pastures in the Kalai Labi Ob jamoat of the Tajikabad district	Restoration of gardens on an area of 2 hectares; Increasing the production of ecological products, improving the market and well-being of the members of the village of Kapali and Kalai Labi Ob.	Building a new garden on an area of 2 hectares by replacing old low-yielding varieties with high-yielding varieties grown on the basis of traditional types of fruit crops to increase yields and increase fruit production and development and provision of the local market. An orchard has been restored on an area of 1 hectare and a pasture has been restored on an area of 1.68 hectares by sowing fodder crops and planting seedlings of forest crops on the territory of degraded lands. A seasonal grazing system has been developed and implemented with members of the local Jamaat community, eliminating overgrazing and degradation of pastures. During the project, methods of winter snow retention, fertilization of flood meadows were implemented and hayfields were revived to obtain winter stocks of coarse feed.	Direct – 70 people, of which 20 women	15100
22	Restoration of forests on an area of 2 hectares and restoration of 3 hectares of pastures and 4 hectares of forests by planting forest and fruit crops, sowing seeds of forage crops that are traditionally grown in the district to improve the condition of forest and pasture ecosystems in Balkhobi jamoat of the Muminabad district	Purchase of grafted and adapted seedlings of forest, fruit and nut crops; Laying a forest garden from fruit and nut seedlings with approved and grafted varieties adapted to local climatic conditions; Sowing seeds of forage crops on the territory of pasture ecosystems; Fencing of the territory of forest plantations and provision of irrigation Raising public awareness of the importance of forests and their ecosystem restoration Dissemination of experience among other members of dehkan farms and jamoats; Market development and competitiveness in domestic and foreign markets.	A forest orchard has been restored on an area of 3 hectares and a pasture has been restored on an area of 2 hectares by sowing fodder crops and planting seedlings of forest crops on the territory of degraded lands. A seasonal grazing system has been developed and implemented with members of the local jamoat community, eliminating overgrazing and degradation of pastures. During the project, methods of winter snow retention, fertilization of flood meadows were carried out and hayfields were revived to obtain winter stocks of coarse feed. As a result, the state of forest and pasture ecosystems in the territory of the Selchien village has improved, productivity has increased and the condition of forests and pastures has improved, awareness of farms and forestry employees at the local level has increased. The example of land users participating in the project implementation has prompted other farms to participate in these initiatives and expand their activity to other territories of the jamoat. In total, 20 women took part in the project, 5 of whom had direct participation and 15 indirectly. The participation of women in the implementation of grant projects contributed to the development of the female half of the members of the dehkan farms and increased their level of knowledge. Taking into account the fact that most men go to work in other regions and outside the country, the participation of women in the implementation of project initiatives takes an important place.	Direct – 60 people, of which 10 women	49259

23	Restoration of forests on an area of 10 hectares and restoration of 2 hectares of pastures by planting forest and fruit crops, sowing seeds of forage crops that are traditionally grown on the territory of the district to improve the condition of forest and pasture ecosystems in Sangvor district	<p>Purchase of grafted and adapted seedlings of forest, fruit and nut crops;</p> <p>Laying a forest garden from fruit and nut seedlings with approved and grafted varieties adapted to local climatic conditions;</p> <p>Sowing seeds of forage crops on the territory of pasture ecosystems;</p> <p>Fencing of the territory of forest plantations and provision of irrigation</p> <p>Raising public awareness of the importance of forests and their ecosystem restoration</p> <p>Dissemination of experience among other members of dehkan farms and jamoats;</p> <p>Market development and competitiveness in domestic and foreign markets.</p>	<p>As a result of the project activities, forest plantations were restored on an area of 10 hectares and pasture was restored on an area of 2 hectares by sowing fodder crops and planting seedlings of forest crops on the territory of degraded lands. A seasonal grazing system has been developed and implemented with members of the local jamoat community, eliminating overgrazing and degradation of pastures. During the project, methods of winter snow retention, fertilization of flood meadows were implemented and hayfields were revived to obtain winter stocks of coarse feed.</p> <p>As a result of the project, the improved state of forest and pasture ecosystems in the territory of the Sangvor jamoat, increased productivity and improved condition of forests and pastures, increased awareness of farms and forestry employees at the local level. The example of land users participating in the project implementation has prompted other farms to participate in these initiatives and expand their activity to other territories of the jamoat.</p> <p>In total, 10 women took part in the project, 5 of whom had direct participation and 5 indirectly. The participation of women in the implementation of grant projects contributed to the development of the female half of the members of the dehkan farms and increased their level of knowledge. Taking into account the fact that most men go to work in other regions and outside the country, the participation of women in the implementation of project initiatives takes an important place.</p>	Direct – 35 people, of which 10 women	48900
Total 2020					445020
2021					

24	Involving students in the practice of snow leopard conservation through a cycle of environmental activities, including participation in competitions, acquiring skills in working with morphological data of camera traps and activating the activities of Varzob district schoolchildren	<p>One of the most important tasks of the project is an educational program for the local population, students and schoolchildren, increasing knowledge about the native nature of local residents. The participants of the program actively cooperate with the local press, telling journalists about the features and habits of this amazing beast.</p> <p>Development of long-term relationships with communities and stakeholders - partners of our organization, including public authorities.</p> <p>Involvement of schoolchildren in activities to preserve the ecosystems of the snow leopard and its food supply through a number of events.</p> <p>Collection and processing of information for the preparation of information materials about the snow leopard, its feeding facilities and mountain ecosystems in general.</p> <p>Develop a strategy for the development of environmental literacy of schoolchildren and youth.</p>	<p>The anti-poaching movement has intensified, measures have been developed to reduce the risk of snow leopard attacks on livestock, cross-border cooperation in the field of wildlife conservation, and the popularization of knowledge among the local population.</p> <p>Processed, analyzed, systematized materials from various sources of information and published a book entitled "Snow Leopard - the spirit of the mountains and a symbol of strength";</p> <p>A survey among students was conducted according to the assessment sheet;</p> <p>Tables, diagrams, presentations have been prepared to visualize the results of monitoring and practical activities.</p> <p>The practical value of the work was to attract young people from among schoolchildren and students to expand the information field of the population about the problems of the snow leopard, as volunteers for propaganda work and assistance in processing research materials. This gave the opportunity to admire the magnificent flora and fauna of the Republic of Tajikistan.</p> <p>During the expeditions, 5 camera traps were placed on the territory of the Varzob gorge. This made it possible to find out the trails of the snow leopard, to clarify its number in this region.</p> <p>The food reserves of the Varzob gorge were studied, or rather, the number of individuals of the mountain goat, which is the main food of the snow leopard.</p>	Direct – 250 people, of which 100 women	22203
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25	Construction of a shed for cattle, a house for shepherds, and the development of beekeeping for the conservation of biodiversity in the village of Poymazor of the Rowan jamoat, for the sustainable life of the community	<p>Construction of a shed and corral to reduce the risk of snow leopard attacks, as well as other wild animals on livestock.</p> <p>Construction of a house for shepherds for overnight accommodation, cooking and storage of provisions.</p> <p>Breeding 20 heads of small cattle as snow leopard feed in winter.</p> <p>Purchase of 20 bee colonies for the development of beekeeping and pollination of mountain pasture vegetation;</p> <p>Awareness and training of local residents in sustainable pasture management and efficient animal husbandry, restoration of degraded pastures, environmental conservation, rational nature management, conservation of agrobiodiversity and habitat of wild animals, including snow leopard.</p> <p>Opening and promoting a page on a social network to show the results of the project.</p>	<p>A new shed made it possible to protect livestock from attacks by snow leopards and other wild animals.</p> <p>The corral supported the sustainable use of pasture resources, allowing to redistribute the load and prevent trampling of pastures.</p> <p>Fattening of 20 heads as a food supply for the snow leopard by releasing it to its habitat. 20 heads of small cattle from the offspring.</p> <p>The new house for shepherds will be the key to their safety, good rest and, as a result, improved performance.</p> <p>A mobile solar panel has been installed in the shepherd's house to improve their living conditions and provide uninterrupted light at night.</p> <p>The production of pure ecological honey and an increase in the income of shepherd families have been established.</p> <p>Representatives of local authorities, as well as the local population, were trained in sustainable management of pasture lands and animals, restoration of degraded pastures, environmental protection, rational nature management, conservation of agrobiodiversity and the habitat of the snow leopard.</p> <p>A Facebook page has been created where all the activities carried out within the framework of the project are covered in stages. Also, awareness and information on the protection of the Snow Leopard will be carried out through social networks.</p>	Direct – 130 people, of which 50 women	32080
26	Planting of grape seedlings on an area of 1 hectare and 200 bee families, for the sustainable life of the local communities of the Khanatarosh village of the Dekhbaland jamoat	<p>Creation of a vineyard to conserve biodiversity and prevent people from confronting the snow leopard (safety).</p> <p>Purchase and breeding of 200 bee families;</p> <p>Training of local residents to develop a plan for sustainable management of pastures and animals, restoration of degraded pastures, environmental protection, rational use of natural resources, conservation of agrobiodiversity and snow leopard habitat.</p> <p>Opening and promoting a page on a social network to show the results of the project.</p>	<p>Grape seedlings have been planted, which provide economic profit for households, improving soil fertility on an area of -1 ha in rain-fed conditions.</p> <p>200 bee families were purchased to conserve biodiversity and pollinate plants.</p> <p>Local livelihoods have been improved due to the development of beekeeping in mountainous areas.</p> <p>Representatives of local authorities, as well as the local population, were trained in sustainable management of pasture lands and animals, restoration of degraded pastures, environmental protection, rational nature management, conservation of agrobiodiversity and the habitat of the snow leopard.</p> <p>The project contributes to the following principle benefits: sustainable agriculture, since the period of keeping livestock on summer pastures is extended by 2 months, increased soil fertility, increased yields, protection of soils in the village from trampling livestock. The main outputs supporting the generation of these benefits are the construction of a shed, reducing the burden on the environment, including the preservation of pasture lands.</p> <p>Both women and men took part in the workshops. Since women are mainly workers in rural areas, the project gave them the opportunity to facilitate work and produce their own products and supply the local market with environmentally friendly products. Thus, women and men had equal opportunities to participate in the project. Women were involved in all the events, 40-50% of the total number of participants.</p>	Direct – 185 people, of which 85 women	23420

27	Improving the socio-economic well-being of more than 20 households of the jamoat of Jirgital and Yangishahr of the Lyakhsh district through the development of beekeeping	<p>Purchase of 200 bee colonies and transfer to 20 households in the jamoats of Jirgital and Yangishahr of the Lyakhsh district. The Carpathian breed of bees has been purchased, which are adapted to local climatic conditions and resistant to diseases and viruses in the highlands.</p> <p>Conducting training sessions on the methods of proper beekeeping, combating bee diseases with the involvement of local specialists and veterinarians.</p> <p>Purchase of necessary equipment and accessories for beekeeping.</p> <p>To sell the produced environmentally friendly honey on national and international markets.</p>	<p>Formation of an understanding of the value and significance of the development of beekeeping in the highlands among local residents, farmers and especially young girls and women.</p> <p>The income level of local communities has been increased.</p> <p>Development of the local market for the sale of ecological honey products.</p> <p>The state of biodiversity has been improved, in particular the pollination of pasture plants and the yield of agricultural crops has been improved.</p> <p>The activity of communities, especially women and young people, in the preservation of the ecosystem, understanding and feeling of the importance of preserving high-altitude pastures has increased.</p> <p>The attitude of the local community to natural resources has changed for the better, the development of beekeeping as one of the key industries in the conservation of biodiversity and habitat of snow leopards and other species of wild animals.</p>	Direct – 135 people, of which 50 women	35898
28	Restoration of degraded forest ecosystems through the introduction and organization of a nursery for the cultivation of forest crops for further distribution in natural places of forest crops in Vahdat district	<p>Restoration of forest ecosystems on an area of 18 hectares;</p> <p>Obtaining additional forest area and increasing forest productivity.</p>	<p>Degraded forest ecosystems have been restored by introducing and organizing a nursery for the cultivation of forest crops for further distribution in natural places of forest crops. The result of the project is an improved state of forest ecosystems on the territory of the "Romit Biosphere Reserve" of the Vahdat district, increased awareness of forestry employees at the local level.</p> <p>The project contributed to the promotion and popularization of effective technologies in different regions of the country, which will significantly reduce the rate of degradation of pastures and lands and improve the ecological condition.</p> <p>The introduction of new technologies to restore pastures and improve forest ecosystems in the life of the population has reduced the ecological burden of the ecosystem, which is often manifested in places with insufficient electricity supply. Due to the lack of energy resources, local residents harvest firewood. By promoting information and introducing technologies into the life of local settlements, the project helped to mitigate the impact of the anthropogenic process on the natural environment, in particular in the area of the snow leopard.</p> <p>Through the implementation of SGP activities and with additional financial support, the farm will have more opportunities for the efficient and rational use of pasture and forest resources, which in turn will serve not only the development and benefits, but also the preservation and improvement of the state of unique natural ecosystems. Practical measures will contribute to the creation of a sustainable and productive platform for further market development and improving the standard of living of local communities. The knowledge, skills and best practices that farmers received during the implementation of the project are aimed at long-term and sustainable benefits for local households from the rational use and conservation of local biodiversity.</p>	Direct – 30 people, of which 10 women	24468

29	Restoration of forest ecosystems through the planting of woody shrub vegetation on an area of 3 hectares by the traditional method of planting by replacing old trees with new ones adapted and resistant to local conditions. Preservation of local flora and fauna through restoration and preservation of forest ecosystems and obtaining a high yield of fruit crops	Restoration of forest ecosystems through planting of woody shrub vegetation on an area of 3 hectares.	<p>Forest ecosystems have been restored through the planting of woody shrub vegetation on an area of 3 hectares by the traditional method of planting by replacing old trees with new ones adapted and resistant to local conditions. The local flora and fauna is preserved through the restoration and preservation of forest ecosystems and obtaining a high yield of fruit crops.</p> <p>As part of the implementation of the activities, agrotechnical activities were conducted to prepare the land plot, weeds, dried trees and shrubs were cleared, local varieties and forms of fruit and shrub vegetation were purchased, plants were planted and agrotechnical activities for garden care were carried out.</p> <p>The result of the implementation of this project is an improved forest ecosystem of the Shurabad jamoat of the Shamsiddin Shohin district, improved ecological condition, preservation of flora and fauna living on the territory of the jamoat and the district as a whole. Also an important result is the improved well-being of the local population living on the territory of the jamoat, which was involved in the process of implementing the project activities. The resulting harvest due to the restored forest ecosystems has also helped to meet the demand for fruit in the local and national markets.</p>	Direct – 165 people, of which 65 women	27175
30	Development of beekeeping in the territory of N. Mahmudov jamoat of Shamsiddin Shohin district by purchasing 200 bee colonies and providing them to the local population of this jamoat	<p>Purchase of 200 pieces of bee colonies. Purchase of equipment for the development of beekeeping.</p> <p>Provision of purchased bee colonies and inventory to 10 households of N. Makhmudov jamoat of Shamsiddin Shohin district.</p> <p>Organization and holding of trainings, working meetings on traditional and modern methods of beekeeping, the fight against bee diseases, processing of products and their packaging, the development of the market for bee products.</p> <p>Involvement of local specialists in the field of beekeeping for the project activities. Expansion and dissemination of the experience gained.</p>	<p>During the implementation of the project activities, the main beneficiaries were representatives of the jamoat, with the following benefits:</p> <p>Local residents and from among 10 households received bee colonies for the development of beekeeping;</p> <p>The development of the industry also contributed to the development of agriculture, in particular horticulture, since bees are the main insect pollinators of plants;</p> <p>Improved the state of biodiversity, in particular pasture vegetation due to natural pollination increased productivity of pastures and meadows;</p> <p>Natural ecosystems and habitats of wild animals have been preserved;</p> <p>Gender aspects were developed by involving women and vulnerable segments of the population, which contributed to the development of the industry at the level of the jamoat and the district;</p> <p>The local population was provided with permanent or part-time employment;</p> <p>The levels of knowledge and skills on traditional and modern methods of beekeeping have been increased;</p> <p>The socio-economic well-being of the local population has been increased due to the development of the beekeeping industry;</p> <p>Development of the local market for beekeeping products and introduction of new beekeeping methods.</p>	Direct – 200 people, of which 50 women	31550

31	Development of beekeeping to improve the ecological condition and increase the incomes of local communities of Darvaz district	<p>Purchase of 200 bee families and deliver to 20 households of Darvaz district. Purchase of the Carpathian breed of bees adapted to local climatic conditions, resistant to diseases and viruses in the conditions of the Darvaz district.</p> <p>Training through meetings and workshops on modern methods of beekeeping, bee disease control, product processing and packaging, development of the beekeeping market, as well as the involvement of local specialists and veterinarians in the field of beekeeping.</p> <p>Purchase of necessary equipment and accessories for beekeeping.</p>	<p>Households received bee colonies for the development of beekeeping in Darvaz district;</p> <p>Increased income of the local population and farmers engaged in beekeeping;</p> <p>Improved state of biodiversity, in particular pasture vegetation due to natural pollination increased productivity of pastures and meadows;</p> <p>Conservation of the natural ecosystems of the snow leopard habitat and its prey;</p> <p>Development of gender aspects involving women and youth in the implementation of project activities, providing employment and increasing profitability;</p> <p>Increasing the level of knowledge and skills on new beekeeping methods and the overall development of the industry;</p> <p>Improved well-being of the local population, the development of the beekeeping industry, the introduction of new beekeeping methods and the development of the market.</p>	Direct – 240 people, of which 105 women	28032
Total 2021					224826
2022					
32	Development of beekeeping in the territory of the dehkan farm of the village of Faizabad, jamoat of Dehibaland, Muminabad district and conducting training and workshops with the involvement of specialists and veterinarians on the methods of proper beekeeping	<p>Purchase of 200 bee colonies and deliver to 20 households in Faizabad village, Dehibaland jamoat of Muminabad district. The Carpathian breed of bees will be purchased, which are adapted to local climatic conditions and resistant to diseases and viruses in the conditions of the Muminabad district.</p> <p>Conducting training workshops on the methods of proper beekeeping, combating bee diseases with the involvement of local specialists and veterinarians.</p> <p>Purchase of necessary equipment and accessories for beekeeping.</p>	<p>As a result of the project, local residents, farmers, and especially young girls and women have developed a broad knowledge of beekeeping methods.</p> <p>The incomes of local communities and farmers and the development of local markets for clean ecological products have been increased.</p> <p>The state of biodiversity has been improved, in particular the pollination of pasture plants and the improvement of crop yields</p> <p>The activity of communities, especially women and young people in the preservation of the ecosystem, understanding and feeling the importance of preserving high-altitude pastures has increased.</p> <p>The attitude of the local community to natural resources has changed for the better, high-altitude pastures are being restored as one of the key habitats of the snow leopard and other wild animal species.</p>	Direct – 107 people, of which 42 women	38578

33	Restoration of pasture lands on an area of 3 hectares and restoration of 12 hectares of forest ecosystems by planting forest and fruit crops, sowing seeds of fodder crops that are traditionally grown in the district to improve the condition of forest and pasture ecosystems	<p>Purchase of grafted and adapted seedlings of forest, fruit and nut crops;</p> <p>Laying a forest garden from fruit and nut seedlings with approved and grafted varieties adapted to local climatic conditions;</p> <p>Sowing seeds of fodder crops on the territory of pasture ecosystems;</p> <p>Fencing of the territory of forest plantations and provision of irrigation</p> <p>Raising public awareness of the importance of forests and their ecosystem restoration</p> <p>Dissemination of experience among other members of dehkan farms and jamoats;</p> <p>Market development and competitiveness in domestic and foreign markets.</p>	<p>Pasture lands on an area of 3 hectares have been restored and 12 hectares of forest ecosystems have been restored by planting forest and fruit crops, sowing seeds of fodder crops that are traditionally grown on the territory of the district to improve the condition of forest and pasture ecosystems.</p> <p>The result of the projects is an improved state of forest and pasture ecosystems in the Hasorak village of the Dashtijum jamoat, increased productivity and improved condition of forests and pastures, increased awareness of farms and forestry employees at the local level. The example of land users who participated in the implementation of the project prompted other farms to participate in these initiatives and expand their activity to other territories of the jamoat.</p> <p>During the implementation of the project, local residents, farmers, young people and especially girls and women developed skills and knowledge on beekeeping methods and an understanding of the importance of preserving the mountain ecosystem.</p>	Direct – 143 people, of which 58 women	38870
34	Restoration of degraded pasture lands by building a shed for cattle and a small house for rest and overnight accommodation of shepherds, to preserve the ecosystems of the snow leopard	<p>Construction of a shed for small and large cattle with a capacity of 300- 450 heads to protect against attacks by wild animals.</p> <p>Construction of a small house for rest and overnight accommodation of shepherds during cattle stops.</p> <p>Development of activities for the phased rehabilitation of pasture lands on the territory of the farm.</p> <p>Dissemination of the experience gained in the rehabilitation of pasture lands to other pasture territories that are ecosystems of the snow leopard.</p> <p>Preparation and distribution of information booklets and brochures on methods of rehabilitation of pasture lands in the highlands of the Shamsiddin Shohin.</p>	<p>Activities have been taken to rehabilitate pasture lands on the territory of the dehkan farm. The risk of wild animals attacking livestock during grazing and parking is reduced, thereby minimizing the risk of human conflict with wild animals, in particular with a leopard.</p> <p>The natural ecosystems of the mountainous territories of the Shamsiddin Shohin district have been restored, and improved food supply for wild ungulates.</p> <p>One 40 x 5 shed was built, which accommodates 300-450 heads of small and large cattle, and a fenced enclosure without a roof for walking cattle was also built on the front of the shed. A tray for watering animals is built at the entrance to the aviary. A small house has also been built for shepherds where they can relax, cook their own food and spend the night if necessary.</p> <p>Taking into account the fact that the territory of the farm occupies 1.2 hectares, in some areas measures were taken to rehabilitate pasture lands, by sowing alfalfa seeds, watering pastures, and other measures that contribute to the restoration of pasture lands.</p>	Direct – 48 people, of which 18 women	49028
Total 2022					126475
Grand Total 2017-2022					1,168,342

Annex 11: TE Audit Trail

Chapter and section number, paragraph/line	Comments	MTR responses and/ or actions taken
Project Information Table	It would be good to add a line in the table to indicate key NGOs involved in project implementation	Project partners, including NGOs, were added under “Other execution partners”
TE ratings and summary assessment	I suggest to split this section to list separately findings and conclusions. Otherwise, findings, recommendations and achievements are spread across the document, that makes it different to understand the summary	The section has been restructured.
TE scope, approach and methodology	It would be good to split this section to indicate separately scope, methodology and limitations	Amended as requested
Project Results and Impacts	Although the narrative provides ratings and details on the evaluation criteria, it would be good to add a summary table with ratings against each assessed evaluation criteria	The Projects and Results and Impacts table includes a colour scheme for ratings. These ratings support the Outcome ratings (MS for Outcome 1, S for Outcome 2, and S for Outcome 3) and the overall progress rating (S) presented in para 14. The evaluation ratings are presented in Table 2 (Executive Summary, before the Key Recommendations section)
Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment	Can you please specify that this was a project developed gender action plan as we have the other one at the CO level	Done, para 150
Main Findings, Conclusions and Lessons Learnt	So far this section lists only lessons, hence suggest to re-organize the document to have findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations in the first section of the report. This will ensure all the key information is available in one section for easy reference	The section was split into “findings and conclusions”, “lessons learnt”, and “recommendations”. Same applies to the Executive Summary section
Recommendations	A suggestion, pending a decision from the UNDP CO Management, to avoid/remove/reformulate recommendations requiring costed actions by the CO. Given that the project is already completed and there is no phase-out budget envisaged, the recommendations for the project phase-out and the specific	Out of 14 recommendations offered by the TE, the first four recommendations are addressed to the NIM IP (NBBC) as one principal holder of the project heritage, the institutional backbone for the project sustainability and the principal responsible for the project phase-out communications with the stakeholders. Those are actions that should have been implemented as part

	<p>recommendations may be impossible/not feasible to implement.</p> <p>Also, the recommendations should not be addressed to the project as the project is completed and there is no staff to implement them.</p> <p>Overall, it would be good to arrange recommendations in the table with indication of the suggested responsible entity.</p>	<p>of the project exit phase under the UNDP CO oversight.</p> <p>Recommendations 5 and 6 reflect on the specific outputs or aspects of this project's performance and, ideally, should be a part of the costed exit plan for the project. While Recommendation 6 carries no additional costs, Recommendation 5 includes an action plan suggested by the TE in order to rectify the impact and sustainability issues with the Sangvor refuge; some of these actions require simplified contracting arrangements and limited financial resources that are within the limit of funds unspent by the project (that should otherwise be returned to the donor). It is up to the IP's and UNDP CO's Management to decide whether this unspent balance can be used to implement the exit plan actions on an exception basis after the project operational completion. These aspects could and should be reflected in the TE Management Response.</p> <p>The remaining seven recommendations are intended to enhance the capacity for implementing future projects and do not require an immediate management action.</p>
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Annex 12: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

UNEG Code of Conduct form

Evaluators:

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

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form¹

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

Name of Consultant: Irina Golomina



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

Signed in Moscow, Russia on 06 July 2022

¹ www.unevaluation.org/uneqcodeofconduct

UNEG Code of Conduct form

Evaluators:

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.
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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.
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6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form¹

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

Name of Consultant: Azam Orifov



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

Signed in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on 19 July 2022

¹ www.unevaluation.org/unevaluationcodeofconduct

Annex 13: TE Report Clearance Form

Terminal Evaluation Report for:
Reviewed and Cleared By:

Commissioning Unit (UNDP Portfolio Manager)

Name:

Signature: _____ Date:

Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)

Name:

Signature: _____ Date: