Community-based Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mountain Landscapes of Mongolia's Altai Sayan Eco-Region - Mid-term Evaluation

Findings of the Evaluation Team,

14<sup>th</sup> February 2009

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# List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APR	Annual Performance Report
ASP	Altai Sayan Project
BIS	Biodiversity Information System
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEDO	Community Empowerment & Development Officer
CO	Country Office
DI	Designated Institution
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
EEG	Environment and Energy Group
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoM	Government of Mongolia
GTZ	German development agency
HG	Herder Group
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPECON	Initiative for People-Centered Conservation (NGO)
ITA	International Technical Advisor
LDS	Livelihoods development support
LF	Logical Framework
LMA	Land Management Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MTE	Mid-term Evaluation
METF	Mongolian Environmental Trust Fund
MFAg	Ministry of Food & Agriculture
MFE	Ministry of Finance & Economy
MIRE	Monitoring, information, reporting, evaluation
MNE	Ministry of Nature & Environment
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MoM	Means of measurement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGIC	National Geo-Information Centre
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NMU	National University of Mongolia
NP	National Park
NPD	National Project Director
NPM	National Project Manager
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NRMP	Natural Resource Management Plan
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product
NZNI	New Zealand Nature Institute
PA	Protected Area
PAA	Protected Areas Administration
PDF	Project Development Facility
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PIU	Project Implementation Unit

PSC	Project Steering Committee
RSEM	Report on State of the Environment of Mongolia, 2006-2007
SAP	Strategic action programme
SDC	Sustainable Development Council
SM	Social Mobiliser
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable/ Appropriate, Realistic and Time-bound
SPA	Strictly Protected Area
STAP	Scientific & Technical Advisory Panel
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Tri-Partite Review
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteer
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WFN	Whitley Fund for Nature
WPB	Work plan & budget
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature/ World Wildlife Fund
\$	United States dollar

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### The Altai Sayan Project

With the advent of the market economy in Mongolia in 1990, pressure on natural resources has grown in the Altai Sayan region. Livestock numbers have increased under privatization, particularly goats in response to the high price of cashmere, leading in turn to degradation of pastureland; forestland has been subject to ill-conceived cutting and road building leading to habitat destruction; wildlife has declined because of increasing hunting, amplified by an upsurge in the market value of animal products in East Asian markets; lake fisheries have suffered from weak management and intensive illegal fishing. The main system of nature protection in Mongolia is through an expanded network of protected areas that is administered by the Protected Area's Administration which includes rangers, specialists and state environment inspectors. However this has not proved sufficient to prevent the widespread decline of biodiversity.

The need to involve the herder community more directly in the conservation and management of natural resources was recognised in the late 1990s partly as a result of an earlier UNDP/GEF project in the eastern steppes (MON/97/G32 1998-2005). This project, entitled 'Community-based Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mountain Landscapes of Mongolia's Altai Sayan Eco-region' (ASP), was planned and approved as a five year initiative to contribute to the stated goal of "conservation and sustainable use of globally significant mountain biological diversity..." The project seeks to achieve this goal by 1) mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into sustainable natural resource use policy, programs, and practice and 2) linking traditional protected area management to the landscape around each area, including cross-border cooperation. By the end of the project, it is intended that stakeholders will apply community-based management and conservation strategies that empower herder communities to resolve forest and grassland management problems and improve livelihoods through partnerships with Government and NGOs. The project is defined by six outputs. One (output 6) is concerned with monitoring project performance, leaving five substantive outputs:

Output 1 Institution and policy development;

Output 2 Information management;

Output 3 Landscape conservation;

Output 4 Transboundary conservation; and

Output 5 Livelihoods development with sustainable use of natural resources.

#### The Midterm Evaluation

The Altai Sayan Project started at the beginning of 2005, with GEF funding commencing in 2007. It established teams operating in four aimags, Bayan Olgii, Khovd, Khovsgol and Uvs, with its headquarters in Khovd. A small office was also maintained in Ulaanbaatar. This report is based on an evaluation of the Altai Sayan Project's design, outputs and management. It was conducted by four independent consultants (two international and two national). The evaluators were assisted by an independent international scientist who reported specifically on biodiversity surveys and monitoring.

The consultants worked as two teams. The first team focussed on biodiversity, community development and research achievements in Khovsgol and Bayan Olgii *aimags*. The second team focussed on project inception, management, financing and administration and visited project offices and field sites in Uvs and Khovd *aimags*. Missions in Mongolia took place

from 24<sup>th</sup> October to 23 November 2008. Two draft reports were submitted in December 2008. This midterm evaluation report combines findings from these earlier reports with results of further documentary study and consultation. In addition to covering the initial project concept and design, and the progress that the project made over a four year period of implementation (up until the end of the year 2008), the report makes recommendations for the remaining period of project implementation.

#### **Findings and Conclusions**

The project has developed good connections with government offices in the Altai and Sayan regions and supported a large number of community groups, but in its first four years, it has not so far achieved either of its twin targets of mainstreaming biodiversity into development or establishing a system for ensuring landscape conservation. The progress made in each of its five substantive outputs is as follows.

**Output 1.** Biodiversity conservation mainstreamed into Altai Sayan development institutions. The Altai Sayan project has developed good connections with individual government offices and NGOs active in each of the *aimags* and *sums* in which it is working. However, rather than instigating reforms towards the integration of biodiversity in development it has reverted to supporting existing government institutions in their separate activities. Progress on this output is rated as unsatisfactory.

**Output 2.** Information baseline established and strengthened as basis for integrating conservation into development. The project has organised activities in three main directions (a) commissioning research on biodiversity, (b) environment awareness-raising amongst the general public and school students, and (c) organising a baseline of information on natural resources and biodiversity. The best results have been in raising awareness about environmental issues in schools and eco-clubs and in community-strengthening by developing "information centres". Despite this work, the project has not yet achieved a satisfactory baseline of information with regard to the biodiversity and natural resources in the Altai and Sayan Mountains. There have been few useful baseline surveys of plants, animals, habitats, natural resource uses, threats or socio-economics of herder communities. No functional system for monitoring the use of natural resources has been established. A database for storing, analysing and retrieving survey data has not been developed. Progress on this output is rated as unsatisfactory.

**Output 3.** Landscape-based approach to conservation established and operational. Until the recent commencement of work on the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, ASP had made little progress towards establishing a useful system for landscape conservation in the Altai Sayan. The project had been pursuing several, disconnected strategies, including assistance to the land management agency, PAA and Herder Groups but none of these adequately addressed the management of biodiversity and natural resources at the landscape level. Recently ASP has made substantial preparations for developing a landscape strategy and the first participatory workshop was held shortly after the evaluation mission. Consequently progress on this output over the four years of implementation is rated as unsatisfactory, but recent progress is rated as satisfactory. **Output 4.** Strengthened transboundary conservation action and institutional linkages. There have been several useful transboundary meetings in Russia which resulted in the signing of agreements on joint management plans, but despite the promising start there have been no solid results achieved in this area to date. Progress on transboundary conservation is rated as marginally satisfactory.

# *Output 5.* Community livelihoods developed on the basis of sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity conservation.

The project has supported the formation of some 78 community groups and assisted in organising business training for members in a range of fields, including enterprise development, business financing and product marketing. The range of activities under this component is commendable. However the livelihoods development supported by the ASP has not been closely linked to the sustainable management of natural resources as required by the Project Document. Without a guiding strategy, HG development has been piecemeal and disjointed with many groups receiving minimal assistance. Project support during 2008 has been especially low. A few herder groups have developed well but many others are beginning to feel disillusioned. A substantial number are no longer active. This output is rated as marginally satisfactory.

The project's performance to date is summarised in the following table which provides an overall rating (as requested in the consultants' ToR) based on a simple four point scale: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory.

Aspect	HS	S	MS	U
Project design/Conceptualization			MS	
Implementation approach				U
Stakeholder participation in implementation			MS	
Project monitoring and evaluation			MS	
Results achieved under Output 1				U
Results achieved under Output 2				U
Results achieved under Output 3		$S^1$		U
Results achieved under Output 4			MS	
Results achieved under Output 5			MS	

#### **Ratings for aspects of project performance**

HS - Highly Satisfactory, S – Satisfactory, MS – Marginally Satisfactory, and U – Unsatisfactory.

One factor contributing to poor performance by the project has been a weakness in design with significant output omissions in natural resource management, and in education and awareness Other factors include: the confused and staggered start to the project and its funding; an unsuitable logframe for management purposes; supervision arrangements which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Two ratings are given for Output 3, one to reflect the first 4 years of the project and the other for recent performance.

have not provided sufficiently clear direction for the project; unsatisfactory staff employment conditions combined with the initial location of the project head office in Khovd; and the absence of a broad project implementation plan and monitoring framework.

Significant as these seven factors are, the MTE considers that the principal weakness of the ASP has been in missing the opportunity to procure senior staff and consultants with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and implement its technical components. Senior staff who could have assisted with policy reforms were not recruited and the opportunity to bring in senior consultants to assist with research and management, and to advise on policy reform, was not taken. The resulting weakness in project capacity applies especially to the following technically demanding areas: (a) biodiversity and other baseline surveys, (b) biodiversity threats including mining; (c) biodiversity information systems, (d) natural resource management (planning and practise), and (e) integrating livelihoods with conservation development.

#### **Recommendations and Lessons**

The project has three more years to run and over 50% of its budget to spend. It is therefore in a strong position to accept restructuring, redirection and revision for the purpose of lifting constraints on performance and promoting a strong delivery of outputs. This report contains 11 recommendations aimed at recovering the project (Section 6):

- 1a Revise project structure, Outputs 1-5 and implementation strategies
- 1b Formulate new implementation plan for project duration
- 1c Project duration and extension
- 2 Revise logical framework
- 3 Appoint lead and thematic experts
- 4 Stakeholder participation
- 5 Strategic Role of Government and MNE
- 6 Collaborative programming for Altai Sayan conservation and development
- 7 Project supervision, direction and leadership
- 8 Strengthen the Project Steering Committee
- 9 Staff, employment conditions, professional development, office and interpretation
- 10 Budget and expenditure management
- 11 Strategies for sustainability and replication

For further guidance, a full project strategy containing 3 Revised Outcomes and 11 Revised Outputs is presented under the project's original single objective (Section 6.1.1.2). It is recommended (1c) that the project be extended to the end of 2011. (The case for an extension beyond that date for a further year can be made by the project but only after good progress has been made towards implementing the revised project strategy.) It is particularly advised (recommendation 3) that senior short-term consultants be carefully selected to work with the National Project Manager and International Technical Adviser in driving the revised outputs forward. The project should in general make greater use of international consultants and volunteers to help with the delivery of its technical outputs and with the critical training of project staff and stakeholders.

There are two important lessons that may be derived from the project's first four years of implementation:

- Biodiversity conservation has the superficial appearance of being undemanding but is in fact highly technical. Consequently biodiversity projects require technical inputs and advice from international-level experts. This assumes a management style that understands and values the benefits of working with such experts.
- It is essential that the Project Steering Committee fulfils its critical role, i.e. it meets regularly (with an agenda issued and minutes taken), has the right mix of technical and stakeholder representation, is properly briefed by the Project Manager and his/her team, and provides effective feedback (on key strategic, policy and programme issues, not on day-to-day administration, staffing, work plan and budget approval) to the Project Manager and team.

- - - - -





Note the arc of Altai Mountains descending from Russia in the northwest of the image and curving southeast into the Gobi desert of Mongolia. The Sayan Mountains form an S-shape on its side beginning to the west of Lake Khovsgol in Mongolia and following westwards along the border on the Russian side.

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

# **1.1 The Project and its Development Context**

The project entitled "Community-based conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mountain Landscapes of Mongolia's Altai Sayan Eco-region" is a 5-year initiative implemented by the Government of Mongolia with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and financing from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Dutch Government. It aims to conserve biodiversity of Mongolia's Altai-Sayan region by (a) integrating conservation into environmental policy and practice, (b) extending protected area management to the wider landscape, and (c) testing a community-based approach to natural resource management. The project is active in four of the western aimags (provinces) of Mongolia, on the country's borders with Russia and China. The project combines fieldwork to establish baseline information and to pilot conservation mechanisms, with policy and institutional reforms that will enable the local community of semi-nomadic livestock herders to play a central role in biodiversity conservation, coupled with gaining direct benefits from the sustainable use of local natural resources.

# **1.2 The Altai-Sayan Ecoregion**

#### 1.2.1 The Altai and Sayan Mountain Ranges

The Altai and Sayan regions are mountainous, with important wildlife biodiversity that is under threat from forest and grassland degradation as well as from hunting, competition from livestock, pollution of streams and rivers, and infrastructure developments (Figure 1). Mongolia's Altai Mountains contain several peaks over 4,000 meters in altitude, and 187 glaciers with a total area of 54,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The Mongolian Sayan is a neighbouring area of 20,605 km<sup>2</sup> that consists of a basin with more than 300 lakes at an elevation of 500-1600 m, surrounded on all sides by mountains with peaks up to 3000 metres. The Shishig River flows from the Sayan into Russia's Yenetsi River, one of the world's ten largest rivers, which continues north to the Arctic Ocean. The Altai has four major vegetation zones – alpine, steppe, forest steppe, and desert steppe – while the Sayan is dominated by tundra, taiga forest and forest steppe (Project Brief).

#### **1.2.2 Biodiversity**

Mongolia's 'National Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy' describes the Altai Sayan as one of the country's most unique and biologically important areas in terms of species richness, presence of endemic and/or rare taxa, and overall species diversity. It is reported that 120 out of 2500 vascular plant species are strictly endemic and that over 213 rare plant species are represented in the Altai-Sayan.

Well know regional endemics animals include: Altai marmot (*Marmota baibacina*), Altai snowcock *Tetraogallus altaicu* and Altai pikas (subspecies of *Ochotona alpina*). The region is also home to some of the largest populations of argali (*Ovis ammon*), the world's largest wild sheep, the globally endangered snow leopard (*Unica unica*) and its main prey species the Siberian ibex (*Capra sibirica*). Other important mammal species in the region that are of conservation concern within Mongolia include the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*), moose (*Alces alces*), wild reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*), Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*), Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*) and sable (*Martes zibellina*). In addition the amphibians, Siberian salamander (Salamandrella keyserlingii) and Pewzow's toad (Bufo

pewzowi), and the fish species, Taimen (*Hucho taimen*), Lenok (*Brachymystax lenok*) and Pidschian (or Arctic whitefish, *Coregonus pidschian*), are in need of conservation actions (Clark et al 2006, Ocock et al 2006, Terbish et al 2006).

#### **1.2.3** Threats to Biodiversity

The biodiversity of the Altai and Sayan Mountains is under threat from a variety of immediate causes, but especially from forest and grassland degradation and habitat fragmentation as well as from hunting, fishing, collecting of rare plants, competition from livestock, pollution of rivers and streams, and development of roads associated with increased mining and urban development. The following threat assessments were made during the evaluation team's visit to Bayan Olgii and Khovsgol in November 2008.

#### 1.2.3.1 Threats to Pasture

The pasture condition in Khovsgol appeared to be satisfactory but was severely denuded in many parts of Bayan Oglii, even at a substantial distance from the *sum* centre. This could only partly be attributed to the current dzud. Quantitative information on biomass or cover of ground vegetation was not found. However information gathered by the project from *sum* offices indicated that the total number of livestock in Bayan Olgii has increased since the 1990s responding to the introduction of the market economy in 1990 (top solid line in Figure 2). The number of goats has increased markedly in recent years driven by the high price paid for cashmere on the international market (see dotted line at bottom of Figure 2). If the goats are excluded from the total number of livestock, it can be seen that the livestock have actually decreased over the past 10 years (middle dashed line in Figure 2).



Figure 2. Absolute numbers of livestock (combining camels, horses, cattle, sheep and goats) and numbers of goats in Bayan Olgii *aimag*.

This result emphasises that goats (and therefore the price of cashmere) are the principal cause of overstocking and degradation of pastureland in the aimag.

An alternative hypothesis for the deterioration in pasture quality is the impact of climate change. Bayan Olgii is in the more arid sector of Mongolia (Figure 3), making it particularly vulnerable to any tendency of the climate to drier conditions. In the past 68 years, Mongolia's annual total precipitation has dropped by 7% (MNE 2008). The project is concerned by these changes and has, for example, stated that precipitation is decreasing in its PowerPoint presentations. However the meteorological data provided by the Bayan Olgii office gives no indication of any decline in mean annual precipitation, which is an important driver of pasture productivity (Figure 4).

There might have been a shift in the seasonality of precipitation with a decline in the vital summer precipitation despite the lack of decrease in the annual total. However, RSEM (2006-2007) indicates that the summertime precipitation around the Altai Mountains near Gobi-Altai has slightly increased from 1961 to the present. Hence from these data, there is no evidence of a decline in summer rainfall.



Figure 3. Map of precipitation in Mongolia averaged over 30 years.

Annual mean air temperature has been rising consistently over the past 68 years (MNE 2008). Furthermore climate information within the Hövsgöl basin - gathered from meteorological stations at Hatgal (1963-2003), Hanh (1971-2003) and Murun (1940-2003) – reveal that the date at which the ambient temperature passes  $10^{\circ}$  C (an important threshold for plant growth) is being reached earlier in the year than previously, shifting from 12 June in 1996 to 14th May in 2004 at Hatgal (Murray 2004). Even so the period of pasture growth in Khovsgol has

not tracked the rising temperature in early summer. The main period of precipitation still commences in July in the Khovsgol Basin and the loss of soil and plant moisture from evapotranspiration may prevent pastures responding to warmer conditions early in the year.



# Mean Annual Precipitation for Bayan Olgii

Figure 4. Annual precipitation (averaged for 6 project *sums*) in Bayan Olgii over a 30 year period.

On balance, the evidence so far indicates that the main driver of the desertification process in Bayan Olgii is not climatic but arises from a marked increase in goat density. Hence, it appears that pasture management in Bayan Olgii is currently more strongly influenced by economic short-termism than by the long term need for ecological sustainability.

#### 1.2.3.2 Threats to Forest

The area of forest in Mongolia comprises 134,000 km<sup>2</sup> or 8.56 % of the total territory (MNE 2008). Most of the forest lies in the northern part of the country which contains the southern fringes of the Siberian taiga (Figure 5). In the project area Khovsgol contains by far the most forest dominated by larch, but the forests extend into Uvs and Bayan Olgii. The management of forest resources in Mongolia suffers from unregulated use and inadequate protection. There are many incidents of illegal logging and transportation using fraudulent copies of the Certificate of Origin (MNE 2008). Meanwhile in the more arid areas, shrubs and trees are used for fuel wood without any form of long-term management; woodlands are being cleared at increasing distances from the settlements (MNE 2000). The total illegal wood harvest, for which the Government receives no royalties or taxes, is estimated to be in the range of

345,000 to 2.38 million m<sup>3</sup> per year or between 36 and 80 percent of total harvest (World Bank 2003). This degree of mismanagement is unsustainable.



Figure 5. Natural Resources of western Mongolia. Note the taiga (larch forest) of the north and the saxaul forest of the Gobi desert.

From the brief field visit by the evaluation team, it appears that the extensive forests of Khovsgol were relatively lightly utilised. In Bayan Olgii, the team were not able to assess the state of forests directly due to bad weather and the remote locations of the remaining forest

fragments. However, the overall area of forest in Bayan Olgii and Uvs is small making them much more vulnerable to logging and wood collecting.

#### 1.2.3.3 Road and Infrastructure Development

Threats to biodiversity at the landscape level arise from the erection of fences and construction of roads and settlements. As part of the Millennium Road Project, a new route will connect China to Russia crossing Khovd and Bayan Olgii (Figure 6). There are also plans for an oil & gas pipeline that will link Russia to China with an alternate route running through the project area and into Olgii (Conservation News 2008).



Figure 6. Planned road developments in the Altai-Sayan Project area (ADB/GoM. 2007) Notice the link running south-west from Olgiy.

# **1.3** Purpose of the Midterm Evaluation

This report is based on an evaluation of the Altai Sayan Project's design, outputs and management by four independent consultants (two international and two national). The evaluators were assisted by an independent international scientist who reported specifically on biodiversity surveys and monitoring. The report reviews and evaluates the project, covering the initial concept and design and the progress made over a four year period of implementation up until the end of the year 2008. The report also makes recommendations that cover the remaining period of project implementation. The Terms of Reference for the MTE are attached (Annex 1).

A mid-term project evaluation is a UNDP requirement for all GEF full-size and medium-size projects. It is intended to provide an independent and objective assessment of the project and its implementation, to identify potential project design and implementation problems, assess progress towards the achievement of planned objectives, identify and document lessons and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve project implementation and the sustainability of impacts, including recommendations about replication and exit strategies.

# **1.4** Methodology of the Midterm Evaluation

The evaluation involved review of project design documents, progress reports, technical papers, administration arrangements, budget financing and expenditure, together with inspection of project sites, meetings and one-to-one interviews. The latter were held with project staff, representatives of partner organisations, members of local communities, government and district officials, and a variety of technical experts. The evaluation was undertaken by two teams. The first team focussed on the biodiversity, community development and research achievements of the project and undertook a two-week field assessment of the project's work in two of the target *aimags*, Khovsgol and Bayan Olgii (Figure 1). An itinerary and list of organisations and individuals consulted is provided in Annex 2. The second team focussed on project inception, management, financing and administration with assessment of project offices and field sites in two other target *aimags*, Uvs and Khovd (Annex 3). Both teams evaluated the project's conception, design, management and progress over the first four years of project implementation, and made recommendations for strengthening and focussing the project over the remaining period of its implementation.

At the outset of the mission, the consultants were briefed by UNDP Mongolia and GEF Asia and The Pacific, and by the newly-appointed National Project Manager and main office staff. Field travel through each of the four *aimags* was organised and led by the respective project Coordinators, who provided invaluable information and commentary. It proved helpful that the local Coordinators of Khovsgol and Bayan Olgii had previously been directors of the PAA in their respective *aimags*. It was particularly valuable also for the second team to have discussions in the middle of the mission with the head of the UNDP Mongolia environment unit who was visiting the Khovd project office at the same time, and for the mission to be accompanied through Khovd aimag by the NPM. These arrangements provided good opportunities for participation and feedback during the evaluation.

Following their field visits, the consultant teams each made a presentation in Ulaanbaatar to members of the Project Steering Committee and to UNDP, reporting on the evaluation

mission and findings, and outlining their draft recommendations for the project. Considering the complexity of the project, the evaluation missions were short and provided little opportunity for liaison between the two teams. Nevertheless they offered good opportunities for intensive consultations and observation of field results. Each team produced an interim report. The report of the second team covered 'Project Design, Management, Implementation and Results' (Annex 11). This present report integrates the findings and assessments of the overall evaluation process and comprises the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the Altai Sayan Project.

# **2 PROJECT OVERVIEW**

### 2.1 **Project Timeline**

The staggered start by the three donors has led to confusion over the duration of the project. For the Dutch Government and UNDP, the project started around the beginning of 2005, and therefore may be considered to be closing at the end of 2009, with all "their" funds spent. As the GEF funding commenced in 2007, the planned 5-year period may be considered to be ending in 2011. Clearly it is important for this question to be resolved and a new timetable for the remainder of the project to be set and agreed by the parties. The timetable should take into account the balance of funds available (56% of the original combined budget), the need to clarify, focus and simplify the project plan, and the need to allow sufficient time for the project to achieve the major part of its planned objectives (Section see Recommendation 1c in Section 6). It is important for the revised duration to apply to the project as a whole and for each of the supporting parties – the Dutch Government, UNDP and GEF as well as GoM – to accept and approve the proposed arrangement.

# 2.2 **Problems and Opportunities**

With the advent of a market economy in Mongolia from 1990, pressure on natural resources has grown in the Altai Sayan region. Livestock numbers have increased under privatization, particularly goats in response to the high price of cashmere, leading in turn to degradation of pastureland; forestland has been subject to ill-conceived cutting and road building leading to habitat destruction; wildlife has declined because of increasing hunting, amplified by an upsurge in the market value of animal products in East Asian markets; lake fisheries have suffered from weak management and intensive illegal fishing. The main system of nature protection is through the expanded network of protected areas that is administered by the Protected Area's Administration (PAA) which includes rangers, specialists and state environment inspectors. However this has not proved sufficient to prevent the widespread decline of biodiversity.

As the GoM focussed on economic development across the country, a number of new opportunities emerged for introducing sustainable and profitable practices. The 'use-values' by which inhabitants of the Altai and Sayan Mountains measure their landscape's worth (e.g. how many livestock they can graze on a piece of land) are being transformed as new enterprises like community-based wildlife management and tourism emerge. The global popularity of ecotourism and sport hunting gives the Altai in particular a sizeable comparative economic advantage where previously it had little, as does the growing opportunity to pursue environmentally friendly hydropower (Project Brief).

The need to involve the herder community more directly in the conservation and management of natural resources was recognised in the late 1990s partly as a result of an earlier UNDP/GEF project in the eastern steppes (MON/97/G32 1998-2005).Given the decentralised nature of resource management in remote areas of the Mongolian countryside, there is a particular need to develop community-based natural resource management and to integrate it with management of the protected area network. At the same time there is a need to mainstream biodiversity conservation into the developmental policy and practises of central and local government. These threats, needs and opportunities provided the logic for developing a landscape-level conservation approach in the Mongolian Altai and Sayan Mountain ranges.

# 2.3 Aims of the Project

Project Objective:

# Conservation and sustainable use of globally significant biological diversity in Mongolia's Altai Sayan ecoregion

The project's objective makes clear that the primary beneficiary of the project will be the biodiversity of the Altai Sayan ecoregion. The objective is expanded in a summary statement on the front page of the Project Document, as follows:

The five-year project aims to ensure the long-term conservation of the biodiversity of Mongolia's Altai-Sayan region by mitigating threats and encouraging sustainable resource use practices by local communities. The project seeks to do this by 1) integrating biodiversity conservation objectives into sustainable natural resource use policy, programs, and practice and 2) linking traditional protected area management to the landscape around each area, including cross-border cooperation. By the end of the project, stakeholders will apply community-based management and conservation strategies that empower herder communities to resolve forest and grassland management problems and improve livelihoods through partnerships with Government and NGOs.

# 2.4 Main Beneficiaries

The expanded statement of objectives (above) reveals that the project has two beneficiaries in addition to the biodiversity of the Altai-Sayan region. They are: (i) the Government of Mongolia through assistance with policy reforms for ensuring sustainable use of natural resources, and (ii) local communities through improved livelihoods. The Government of Mongolia includes the local *aimag* and *sum* government offices and the Ministries involved with planning and implementing development in the western region. The local communities include the herder families living in rural locations and the other local people living in the region who are dependent on natural resources in one way or another, including fisheries, wildlife, forest and mineral resources.

#### **2.5 Expected Results**

The project has six outputs (laterally called outcomes), each with associated activities:

#### **Output 1- Conservation Capacity of Productive Sector Institutions and Policies Is Strengthened**

The output is concerned with mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into government and community institutions. Output 1 has four activities:

Activity 1.1: Strengthen cross-sectoral Aimag Councils for Sustainable Development (ACSD) to integrate conservation and development in each of the four aimags. Activity 1.2: Herder families form herder communities as a basis for community-based development and participatory management of natural resources. Activity 1.3: Integrate biodiversity into productive sector policies and strengthen policy enforcement.

Activity 1.4: Build constituency for sustainable development and conservation

# Output 2 - Information baseline established and strengthened as basis for integrating conservation into productive sectors.

This output is concerned with establishing an information baseline on biodiversity and the use of natural resources. It has three activities:

Activity 2.1: Conduct biodiversity and socio-economic surveys and targeted research to support proactive management.

Activity 2.2: Design and establish participatory monitoring and management protocols for data gathering, and analysis and management.

Activity 2.3: Conduct training to enable government and local herders and other stakeholders to incorporate basic biodiversity conservation information into their productive sector work.

*Output 3 – Landscape-based approach to conservation established and operational* This output extends the activities of Output 1 by introducing the concept of landscape-based conservation into the planning and implementation system of the four project aimags:

Activity 3.1. MFAg, NGO and protected area stakeholders construct landscape-level biodiversity conservation plans for Altai Arc and Sayan Basin.

Activity 3.2 Devise and Implement Conservation and Recovery Plans for priority landscape species and ecosystems.

Activity 3.3 Strengthen priority protected areas' ability to apply landscape principles to conservation action.

Activity 3.4. Herder communities designate priority habitat areas in the landscape around each priority PA and develop local priority habitat conservation plans. Activity 3.5. Building upon Activity 3.4, local HCs will develop simple and practical participatory management agreements for each priority landscape area. Activity 3.6. Strengthen priority PA infrastructure and staff capacity.

*Output 4: Strengthened Transboundary Conservation Action and Institutional Linkages.* This output provides an international context for biodiversity conservation. It has three activities:

Activity 4.1. Establish regional coordination committee for transboundary cooperation. Activity 4.2 Elucidate trans-boundary conservation agreements for landscape conservation and regional planning objectives.

Activity 4.3. Regional Conservation & Sustainable Development Conference.

# Output 5: Grazing, forest-use, sport hunting management, and tourism, are re-oriented to support conservation while improving livelihoods.

This output is concerned with assisting herder communities to (a) improve the management of natural resources, (b) support conservation objectives and (c) improve their livelihoods. It has five activities:

*Activity 5.1*: Demonstrate community-based pasture management and livelihood improvement.

Activity 5.2: Pilot areas are established for community-managed hunting program. Activity 5.3: Sustainable forest management practices are demonstrated. Activity 5.4: Cultivate the emergence of apex institution for learning among community groups in the Altai-Sayan. Activity 5.5: Enhance and re-orient existing revenue generation mechanisms for sustainable financing of conservation programs.

Output 6: Monitoring and evaluation are applied as tools for adaptive management, assessment of project impact/progress, and replication of best practices. This output has three activities:

Activity 6.1. Monitor and evaluate project activities and outputs on an annual basis. Activity 6.2. Sharing lessons learned and replication of best practices. Activity 6.3. Adaptive Management Training.

### 2.6 Sources of Funding

The Altai Sayan Project was planned for a duration of 5 years, with an overall budget of \$11 million. The multiple source s and their contributions to the budget are listed in Table 1. GEF financing comprises \$2.72 m, 24% of the total, and co-financing amounts to \$8.52 m, 76% of the total. The project document and budget plan make a further distinction between the funds that are to be managed by the UNDP Mongolia Country Office, a total of \$4.83 m (43% of the total) from GEF, the Dutch Government and UNDP itself; and those that will be managed separately by partner agencies. These include a combined commitment of \$2.4 m (21%) from the two key GoM Ministries (MNE and MFAg), \$1.5 m (13%) from WWF Mongolia, \$1.73 (15%) from ADB, and \$0.75 m (7%) from IFAD (further details in Section 4.3).

# **3 SUMMARY OF MTE RATINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

For certain aspects of the evaluation, the consultants' ToR asked for an overall rating of the project's performance to date, based on a simple four point scale: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory. These ratings are collated in Table 1.

Aspect	HS	S	MS	U
Project design/Conceptualization			MS	
Implementation approach				U
Stakeholder participation in implementation			MS	
Project monitoring and evaluation			MS	
Results achieved under Output 1				U
Results achieved under Output 2				U
Results achieved under Output 3		$S^2$		U
Results achieved under Output 4			MS	
Results achieved under Output 5			MS	

 Table 1. Ratings for aspects of project performance

 ${\rm HS}$  - Highly Satisfactory,  ${\rm S}$  – Satisfactory,  ${\rm MS}$  – Marginally Satisfactory, and U – Unsatisfactory.

 $<sup>^{2}</sup>$  Two ratings are given for Output 3, one to reflect the first 4 years of the project and the other for recent performance.

Recommendations for strengthening delivery of the project following the Mid-term Evaluation are presented in Section 6. For ease of reference, these recommendations are collated below (Table 2). There is a total of 11 recommendations each listed against the agency or individual responsible, and rated for the urgency of its implementation.

	Recommendation	Responsible	Priority*
1a	Revise project structure, Outputs 1-5 and implementation strategies	NPM, ITA, NPD, TPR	1
1b	Formulate new implementation plan for project duration	NPM, ITA	1
1c	Project duration and extension	TPR	1
2	Revise logical framework	NPM, ITA	1
3	Appoint lead and thematic experts	NPM, ITA	1, 2
4	Stakeholder participation	NPM, ITA	2,3
5	Strategic Role of Government and MNE	NPD	2
6	Collaborative programming for Altai Sayan conservation and development	NPM, ITA, NPD, UNDP	2,3
7	Project supervision, direction and leadership	TPR	1
8	Strengthen the Project Steering Committee	TPR	1
9	Project staff, employment conditions, professional development, office and interpretation	TPR	1
10	Budget and expenditure management	NPM, NPD	2,3
11	Strategies for sustainability and replication	NPM, ITA	1,2

Table 2. List of recommendations with responsibility and priority for implementation

\*1 – Immediate action (3-4 months); 2 – Current year (2009) 3 – Remaining years.

# **4 EVALUATION FINDINGS**

### 4.1 **Project Formulation**

The Altai Sayan Project (ASP) was conceived in the late-1990s and designed in the period 2000 to 2002, by UNDP-contracted consultants using the Project Development Facility (PDF) of the GEF. Reports on the PDF exercise, the process followed, results of studies undertaken and discussions organised by the design team consultants have not been reviewed or evaluated by the MTE.

The main product arising from the PDF exercise was the Project Brief that was submitted to and approved by GEF in 2006. It forms the major part of the Project Document completed and approved by the Government of Mongolia and UNDP in 2006, with UNDP as the nominated GEF Implementing Agency for the Altai Sayan Project. The following evaluation of the project concept and design is based primarily on the combined 2006 Project Document and Brief although it is noted that several of the detailed annexes referred to were not made available to the MTE.

#### 4.1.1 Problem Analysis and Project Conceptualization

A general finding of the MTE is that the Project Brief presents an excellent account of the situation in Mongolia pertaining to environmental governance, biodiversity conservation, land management and development. The analysis is thorough but succinct and conveys clearly the prevailing problems facing the country and the western region in which the Altai and Sayan mountain ranges lie. The key issues that provide justification for a project intervention may be summarised as follows:

- a The mountainous regions of Altai and Sayan in far north-western Mongolia contain biological diversity in a range of natural habitats that is of national, regional and global significance for conservation.
- b The land, water, grassland, forest and wildlife resources of the two regions have been used extensively for centuries by the local herder community for their subsistence and livelihoods. The community is primarily dependent on maintaining large numbers of livestock (sheep, goats, cattle, yaks, camels and horses), which are moved seasonally to different areas of pasture. Firewood, timber and water collection and wildlife hunting are other important resource uses.
- c All land and natural resources are owned by the State and used as common property by the herder community. Active land or habitat management is virtually absent. There is little or no regulation of livestock grazing by area or stocking density, or of firewood or timber collection. Traditional community-centred mechanisms have been broken down for much of the past century. Much of the region's landscape is heavilygrazed grassland and forest land, seriously-degraded in many parts, and highly vulnerable to vegetation loss, soil erosion and desertification, exacerbated by periodic droughts and flash-flooding.
- d Conventional state-managed nature conservation is based on protecting discrete sites, so that a number of mountain peaks, lakes and forested areas, covering roughly 10% of the landscape, are currently designated national Protected Areas (PAs) and policed by government rangers. There is little involvement of local communities in management. The PAs and the wildlife populations they contain are not viable without habitat protection and restoration across the landscape that surrounds and connects them to one another.

The process of GEF project formulation includes an appraisal of the design brief by a reviewer from the GEF Scientific & Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) and by GEF Council member governments. In the case of the Altai Sayan Project, the MTE considers that the STAP and Council members made comments on the design that were particularly perceptive and useful. However, it is apparent that the comments resulted in little further change being made to the project design.

#### 4.1.2 Relevance and Country Ownership

The MTE considers that the Altai Sayan Project is highly relevant to Mongolia at the present time, and to the Government of Mongolia's vision and priorities. As noted in the project brief, the project was designed in line with priority no. 7 of the Government's Action Programme: "to implement environment policy aimed at providing sustainable development and ecological balance by harmonizing protection of biodiversity with regional socio-economic development". The issues on which the project is to focus are re-affirmed as priority objectives in the MDG-based Comprehensive National Development Strategy of Mongolia, drafted in 2007. These include developing an adequate pasture management system; tackling soil erosion and desertification; conservation and rehabilitation of forest lands; citizens' rights to forest resources; sustainable use of wildlife populations; and cross-sectoral management of natural resources.

However, the MTE notes that the Government's agenda for biodiversity conservation tends to emphasise strengthening and extension of the existing conventional system of national protected areas, and organisation of management of land, water, forests and pasture land along separate 'sectoral' lines. This is contrary to the approaches chosen for the Altai Sayan project, which are for an integrated, collaborative management system concerned with biodiversity conservation across the landscape and in regional development. This is an issue to be tackled under Output 1 of the project, on policy and institutional developments, for which it will be important for MNE, the Government and the Altai Sayan Project to reach a clear agreement on the planned results, strategy and actions for implementation of the component.

#### 4.1.3 Project Design

Based on the formulation mission and situation analysis, a project design was prepared and submitted for appraisal and subsequent approval. This project entitled 'Community-based Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mountain Landscapes of Mongolia's Altai Sayan Eco-region' (ASP), was planned and approved as a five year initiative to contribute to the stated goal of "conservation and sustainable use of globally significant mountain biological diversity..." The design is laid out in the combined Project Document and Project Brief first in terms of substance, with reference to each of the planned objectives and implementation strategies to be followed; and second in terms of structure and organisation of the design, by reference to the Logical Framework.

There were three main substantive components planned, plus a fourth on learning and disseminating lessons from the project. These components are described as "Immediate Objectives" in the text of the Project Document. One or two main "Outputs" or sets of results were planned under each of the Immediate Objectives. The project's main objectives as described in the Project Document are summarised in Table 3.

The phrasing of some of the objective statements is complex and their meanings are not clear. The International Advisor edited the outputs into simpler, more straightforward language which improved their comprehensibility (Laurie 2007). As an aid to clarification of the Project's objectives, the substantive meaning of each objective statement and several Output statements are indicated in Table 3.

Objective sta	tements in Altai Sayan Project Document	Substantive meaning		
(Goal)	Conservation and sustainable use of globally significant mountain biological diversity in Mongolia's Altai Sayan Eco-region	Conservation of the biological diversity of Mongolia's Altai- Sayan Eco-region		
Purpose	The successful completion of the project will result in stakeholders devising innovative and adaptive practices to mitigate and prevent threats to biological diversity by applying new partnerships, conservation tools, information, and sustainable livelihoods to conserve biological diversity.	Establishment of a landscape conservation system across Mongolia's Altai and Sayan regions that has the capacity to conserve biodiversity		
Objective 1	Biodiversity conservation objectives integrated into productive sector institutions and policies	Biodiversity protected by mainstreaming conservation		
Output 1	Conservation capacity of productive sector institutions and policies is strengthened	objectives into development at community, <i>sum</i> , <i>aimag</i> and national levels.		
Output 2	Information baseline established and strengthened as basis for integrating conservation into productive sectors	Reliable baseline information obtained on biodiversity and use of natural resources.		
Objective 2	To strengthen "traditional" protected area-based approaches by expanding the landscape around them	Community-based management of natural resources conserves biodiversity at the landscape scale		
Output 3	Landscape-based approach to conservation established and operational	Conservation expanded from the protected area to landscape level		
Output 4	Strengthened trans-boundary conservation action and institutional linkages	Joint transboundary conservation is implemented in the border areas		
Objective 3	To successfully demonstrate how to integrate biodiversity into resource management and economic development practice & policy	Community livelihoods developed on the basis of sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity conservation		
Output 5	Grazing, forest-use, sport hunting management, and tourism, are re-oriented to support conservation while improving livelihoods			
Objective 4	To implement a project that learns from its successes and failures and shares these lessons and replicates best practices effectively among its own stakeholders and with others	Project monitored, lessons evaluated and results publicised for the benefit of all		
Output 6	Monitoring and evaluation is applied as a tool for adaptive management, assessment of project impact/progress and replication of best practices			

 Table 3. Project objectives (from the Project Document) together with suggested interpretation by the MTE

The project's framework of objectives and outputs is not specified clearly in the project design. The component objectives (referred to as Immediate Objectives in the Project Document, see Table 3 above) do not even appear in the logical framework (see below). GEF advises that objectives should be derived from existing problems and the desired situation, and they should also be achievable. In other words, objectives are pragmatic solutions to

existing problems. Furthermore, the objectives should be structured in a hierarchical order such that the lower objectives provide the means of achieving the end result identified in the highest objective (UNDP/GEF (2005a).

The following are three examples of the ASP's planned objectives that are difficult to interpret, with suggestions from the MTE for clearer, more focused statements:

- The Purpose statement reads: "The successful completion of the project will result in stakeholders devising innovative and adaptive practices to mitigate and prevent threats to biological diversity by applying new partnerships, conservation tools, information, and sustainable livelihoods to conserve biological diversity." It is good practice for the project purpose to be singular, specific, and very clear in meaning, so as to serve as an anchor for the entire project. The ME's suggestion for a revised Purpose statement is as follows: Establishment of a landscape conservation system across Mongolia's Altai and Sayan regions that has the capacity to conserve biodiversity.
- The objective for Objective 1 reads: "Biodiversity conservation objectives integrated into productive sector institutions and policies." The use of the term productive sector institutions is unfamiliar to many. The ME's suggested re-wording is for a component objective as follows: Biodiversity protected by mainstreaming conservation objectives into development at community, sum, aimag and national levels. Under this component, a set of planned Outputs is needed, focused on the reform and development of policies and institutions that will support community-based, conservation-based, collaborative, and integrated management of natural resources.
- The objective for Objective 3 reads: "To successfully demonstrate how to integrate biodiversity into resource management and economic development practice & policy." Confusingly, this objective seems similar to Objective 1. The MTE suggests that it should be re-worded as follows: Community livelihoods developed on the basis of sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity conservation. This places the focus of the project's community work on achieving economic or livelihoods development that is compatible with and supportive of biodiversity conservation.

Based on its assessment of the project design, the MTE **recommends** (1a) that ASP reaffirms very clearly the substance of what the Altai Sayan Project is aiming to achieve and, in the process, revises the Outcomes and Outputs to provide a more coherent project strategy (see Section 6). It is **recommended** (1b) that this work is accompanied by formulation of an implementation plan for the duration of the project (complete with indicators and milestones) and a budget in line with the changes made (see Section 6). It is **recommended** (1c) that the programme period of the Altai Sayan Project remain as given in the 2006 Project Document (i.e. 2007 - 2011) (see Section 6).

#### 4.1.4 Project Logical Framework

It is standard best practice for the whole project plan to be summarised in a rigorouslyprepared Logical Framework (LF) or equivalent management tool (for planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation). All UNDP-GEF projects are required to prepare a logical framework. A key finding of the MTE is that the Alta Sayan Project does not have a well-prepared logical framework; the version in the Project Document (Annex ii) is poorly developed and a subsequent attempt by project management to revise the logical framework was not adequate or successful. The LF produced by the inception workshop was reviewed by the ITA and a revised version was drafted at the November 2007 planning meeting, based on a single objective (in accordance with UNDP/GEF guidelines) and new, clearer outcomes (Laurie 2007). However it didn't progress beyond the draft stage. The various revisions have devised longer lists of indicators to monitor the project's performance, but have not improved the overall design of the project or produced a plan, summarised as the LF, that is readily able to be implemented and likely to achieve success. At the time of the MTE, it seems that there was little understanding among management staff of the overall logic of the project plan, and significantly, little or no use was being made of the logical framework to guide project implementation, monitoring or reporting.

The MTE considers that the inadequacies of the ASP's logical framework have hindered the efficient and effective organisation and implementation of the project to date. A well-developed and clearly-understood LF is needed as the basis for each of the other main tools required for the on-going planning and management of the Altai Sayan project. These include tools which the ASP uses now – the budget plan and the detailed work plan; and other tools that project management needs to develop, including a whole-duration implementation plan (Recommendation 1b), clear strategies for each of the main project components, and a robust system of information, M&E, reporting and communications.

ME comments on the ASP's logical framework are as follows (for ease of reference, the logical framework from the Project Document, the summary project objectives from the Project Document narrative, and the latest revision of the logical framework prepared at a planning workshop (Laurie 2007) are reproduced in Annex 4 of this report):

- a Generally, the LF is poorly-edited and not easy to understand. It needs to be restructured and further-developed in order to provide a useful tool for project management. It would be valuable to develop a simpler version for communication purposes, and a Mongolian language version as was produced in the most recent revision (Laurie 2007).
- b The main difficulty with using the original and the revised LFs is that there is no logical hierarchy of clear objectives forming the 'backbone' of the entire project. The original version of the LF consists of only Goal and Purpose statements and 6 major "Outputs"<sup>3</sup>, which are not clearly-worded or well-formulated as SMART<sup>4</sup> results, suggesting that no-one had sufficiently thought through or planned out a clear logical hierarchy of objectives as the core of the project plan.
- c The logframe matrix should be revised to conform with GEF guidelines (UNDP/GEF (2005a,b). The left hand column of the LF matrix is the project strategy. It is defined by a four-level hierarchy: goal, objective, outcomes and outputs. The goal is the higher objective to which the project will contribute but not reach without other projects. The objective is the reason for doing the project the benefit that is achievable. The outcomes are the key components of the project objective which establish the necessary conditions for biodiversity conservation. The outputs are single results that can be achieved through completion of project activities. These 'levels of objective' should be carefully crafted, so that they do progress logically from one tier up to the next, provided that the Risks noted in the right-hand column do not arise and block progress.
- d The horizontal axis of the ASP Logframe is better developed than the vertical. It presents a summary of how the progress or performance of each component of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The current "Outputs" are also too high-level, lying somewhere between Outcomes and Outputs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> A SMART objective is one that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Appropriate, Realistic and Time-bound.

project will be monitored. The main problems are that the Indicators are long-winded, not SMART, and there are too many of them<sup>5</sup> for each of the six Outputs (for example there are nine Indicators and Milestones for Output 3). It is better practice for each row of the LF to include a singular objective statement (or outcome or output), a few (1-3) key indicators that signal progress towards the objective (or outcome or output), and a note on how data on each indicator will be obtained. (The 'means of measurement or verification', MoM will of course depend on the collection of baseline information which is urgently needed.) Also alongside each objective (or outcome or output), a more tangible Target and/ or progressive Milestone may be included in each row, plus a note on the Baseline level of the Indicator (the first time it is measured).

- e Perhaps because the project's objective, outcomes and outputs are inadequately developed and unclear, the project designers tried to include too much in the Indicators column. The recent revisions have increased the numbers of indicators from an average of 6-7 per objective statement, to an average of over 10. Many of the current Indicators are impact indicators but some are merely descriptions of results or activities that are planned, and should be moved down the LF to a lower layer, or out of the LF altogether into a detailed plan for the specific component of the project.
- f Some of the Indicators are not appropriate or do not provide useful measures of progress towards the adjacent objective. This is caused perhaps by lack of clarity in some of the original objective statements. However, it also suggests that the project stakeholders do not have a clear (or common) understanding of the essential purpose and logic of the project or of what it can realistically achieve.

A priority **recommendation** (2) of the MTE is for the senior project management staff (using resource persons and consulting with project staff and partners as necessary) to revise the logical framework, get it approved as the central guiding plan for the remainder of the project, and then to re-form the main project management tools based on the revised LF. The revision should bring the project logical framework into line with GEF guidelines (see Section 6).

#### 4.1.5 Replication Approach

The design of the Altai Sayan project places an emphasis on its strategy to pilot and demonstrate "model" tools and mechanisms, and for these to be replicated in other local *bags* and *sums*, and sustained in the long-term, by the project building the capacity of "a cross-section of civil-society (*aimag, sum,* and *bag* offices, herder groups, NGOs and Ministry Departments)". The plan proposes also that the project will subsequently "replicate its model activities in other parts of Mongolia and in other parts of the multi-country Altai-Sayan ecoregion."

The project's principal strategy for both sustaining and replicating landscape-scale, community-based, collaborative and integrated management of natural resources is information exchange. The project design stresses development of lessons learned across the project's five main Outputs; the use of demonstrations and extension programs; establishment of local "learning centres"; and linkages with similar initiatives by partner organisations – government agencies, aid agencies, NGOs. The project plan notes also that complementary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> It is appropriate for a <u>draft</u> logframe to have many indicators provided they are whittled down to a manageable number in the <u>approved</u> logframe.

Altai Sayan Eco-Region projects in Russia and Kazakhstan have already formed a joint steering committee with Mongolia; and proposes a regional conference "to share lessons... among Russian, Mongolia, Chinese and Kazakh counterparts."

Much emphasis is placed also on the project forming partnerships with other organisations and programs and transferring knowledge acquired by the project to them. Throughout the project document, work plans and reports, there is considerable recognition given to the need for the project to work in partnership with other agencies, share project resources, organise joint activities, avoid duplication and achieve synergies. Specific reference is made to MNE and to MFAg's current programmes in grazing and grassland management supported by ADB and IFAD; to GTZ's Buffer Zone Development Project; WWF's major programme and experience in Altai Sayan; a "learning portfolio" of UNDP-supported projects; and several other directly relevant projects by other agencies.

In addition, the project's designers were relying to some extent on a Mongolian Environmental Trust Fund (METF) to be operational by 2009, and able to fund replication and mainstreaming of conservation activities in the Altai Sayan region and elsewhere in the country. Unfortunately, the initiative to establish the METF foundered in 2006-07.

The MTE concludes that the AS project to date has not managed to create such an extensive array of partnerships or information exchange. The project does not demonstrate a systematic approach to the development of model tools and mechanisms; to evaluating and demonstrating them; or to drawing and communicating lessons from its experiences (see Section 4.2.7, Stakeholder Participation).

# 4.2 **Project Implementation**

#### **4.2.1** Implementation arrangements

For the Altai Sayan Project, the GEF Implementing Agency is UNDP Mongolia and the executing agency is the Mongolian national Ministry of Nature & Environment (MNE). The planned project period was five years and the budget was US\$ 4.83 million, provided by the Dutch Government, GEF and UNDP. The responsibilities of the main agencies involved in implementing the Altai Sayan project are spelt out in the Project Brief, with salient points summarised below:

- a Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE) is the focal point for UNDP's technical cooperation in Mongolia.
- b MNE is the Designated Institution (DI) in charge of project execution, accountable to MFE and UNDP for achievement of the project's objectives.
- c UNDP Mongolia will monitor, ensure the proper use of UNDP, GEF (and presumably Dutch) funds, and support project implementation (recruitment, contracting, and procurement assistance).
- d The administration of project funds will be the joint responsibility of the UNDP and the MNE. Financial transactions, reporting and auditing will be carried out in compliance with both national regulations and UNDP rules and procedures for national execution.
- e MNE will partner with other "Implementing Agencies" to implement the project, including MFAg, WWF and the Initiative for People-Centered Conservation (IPECON). These and other NGOs will be contracted by the DI and UNDP as full partners in implementing most field-level activities under Outputs 1-5.
- f Funds for partner organization contracts will be devolved as lump sums and administered by the partner organisation.

According to the information made available to the MTE, the Altai Sayan Project is being carried out in accordance with the majority of these directions. The main point of departure from what was clearly intended is the failure to establish the project as a collaborative initiative between a number of "full partner" organisations. This gives rise to a broad concern of the MTE that the AS project has been too isolated, not adequately connected to MNE or mainstream government departments, and not implemented in any sense as a partnership. The MTE notes that the project has commissioned individual consultants and a few NGOs to conduct specific activities (trainings, surveys, GIS). Of the three important "other Implementing Agencies" specified in the Project Brief, the MTE was informed that MFAg and WWF engagement with the project has been minimal; while no mention was made of IPECON.

The MTE considers this "isolation" of the project has hampered the implementation of the project plan and the project's overall effectiveness. This is a particular concern given the nature of the ASP, which clearly must work primarily through and with the existing institutions and stakeholder organisations, reforming their functions and building their capacities, if it is to have any success. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that contracts with other implementing agencies should only be considered when they are clearly in line with objectives and the agency has the capacity to provide essential project services.
The MTE's concerns on project isolation extend to the two main agencies responsible for overseeing effective delivery of the Altai Sayan Project, UNDP and MNE. For the former, it is apparent that more could be done to create solid, effective working links between its projects. In addition, other UN agencies in Mongolia have their own projects. Several projects in current UN agency portfolios have interests, objectives, and tasks to conduct that overlap with one another and with the Altai Sayan Project. To work more efficiently and effectively towards the common goals of conservation and sustainable development, it would be valuable for UNDP to remove any barriers and actively organise for these projects to work jointly on these areas of overlapping interest.

Perhaps even more importantly, the various departments within MNE need to engage more directly with and make much more use of the Altai Sayan Project. It is not readily apparent at present that ASP is an initiative of the MNE, whereas in the view of the MTE, a critical objective of the project is to provide assistance directly to MNE for development of its policies, legislation and institutions (and those of its sister Ministries and their *aimag*- and *sum*-level counterpart offices), so that MNE can ensure that the landscape-scale, integrated, community-based conservation system that is proposed in the project plan is sustained and replicated. **MTE recommendation (5)** is for the Ministry of Nature & Environment to revise its relationship with the Altai Sayan Project in order to facilitate substantive interactions between the ASP, MNE, MFAg and GoM (see Section 6).

## 4.2.2 Partnerships and collaborative programming

The emphasis of the Altai Sayan project's design on forming partnerships is an appropriate and critical consideration, given the large number and significance of relevant programmes and projects that are underway, or are planned, in the Altai Sayan region and elsewhere in Mongolia. A preliminary list is compiled in Annex 5. However, it is clear that to date this important strategy has not been developed adequately by the project. Many agencies and projects share the same goal as the ASP, but no joint programmes seem to have been developed. Interagency MoUs are not enough. There is a strong tendency for projects to work in slightly different ways, each with its own structure, plans, techniques, finances and administrative procedures. As the agencies' priorities change and the projects come and go, the projects may contradict or hinder one another, fail to learn from one another's results and lessons, and not leave any lasting influence. For the Altai Sayan region at present, the array of comparable initiatives forms a significant but unrealised opportunity to organise substantial resources towards the common goals of conservation and sustainable development. MTE recommendation (6) is for the Altai Sayan project management, with the assistance of MNE and UNDP Mongolia, to liaise systematically with the large number of relevant agencies and projects active in the Altai Sayan region, and prepare jointly with them a common Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the region's conservation and sustainable development (see Section 6).

## 4.2.3 **Project supervision**

## 4.2.3.1 Project Steering Committee

In accordance with the Project Document, a Project Steering Committee (PSC) has been formed and apparently met, in Ulaanbaatar, although no meeting records have been reviewed

by the MTE. The intended membership of 13 was as follows, although apparently not all have attended the meeting(s):

- Ministry of Nature & Environment (Chair the National Project Director)
- Governors of Bayan-Olgii, Khovd, Uvs and Khovsgol aimags
- 2 Members of the National Parliament, elected from the Altai and Sayan regions
- Ministry of Food & Agriculture
- Border guard
- WWF Mongolia Program
- UNDP Mongolia
- Representatives from a women's group and a herder association.

The Project Document (Appendix B. Annex I, page 86-7) specifies the major dual responsibilities of the PSC. The first is "outwards" from the project, to provide strategic guidance, a forum to ensure integrated approaches among stakeholders, and facilitate supportive actions in their respective organisations. It is notable that most of the institutions flagged in the Project Document as close partners in implementing the ASP are members of the PSC, emphasising its potential role in driving collaborative programming for conservation in the Altai Sayan regions. The second role of the PSC is "inwards" to the project, to monitor, review progress, oversee and supervise the project.

# 4.2.3.2 National Project Director (NPD)

A senior official from MNE has been appointed National Project Director; he chairs the PSC and is responsible to the Government for overseeing proper project implementation. Importantly, the NPD has the pivotal role of developing linkages between the Altai Sayan project and the executing agency, MNE, and other government agencies. As noted above, this is a critical function for the Altai Sayan Project in particular, because of its objective to reform and develop the capacities of MNE and other government departments. It is noted that at present the NPD acts also as the day-to-day administrative director of the project, which is inefficient use of both his and the NPM's time, and detracts from the NPD's strategic guiding role.

## 4.2.3.3 Tripartite Review (TPR)

UNDP projects in a country are governed by a Tri-Partite Review body, comprising the Government, the Executing Agency and UNDP<sup>6</sup>, and expected to meet at least once a year to receive annual progress and financial reports and approve the future work plan and budget. The ASP Project Document refers to it as "the highest policy-level meeting of the parties directly involved in the implementation of a project." The MTE was advised that the TPR has not convened for the ASP, and its functions have been devolved to the PSC.

As a relatively-large and -complex, externally-funded project, the ASP needs to be given careful and rigorous direction in order to increase the chances of successful implementation and achievement of the planned results. The annual performance review (APR/PIR 2008) rated the project implementation as unsatisfactory. The MTE is concerned that the supervision arrangements have not provided clear direction for the project, but have tended to focus on minor management and administrative decisions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> In the case of the ASP, TPR membership would be MFE, MNE (the NPD) and UNDP.

**MTE Recommendation** (7) is to streamline and strengthen the arrangements for project supervision, direction and leadership, in three main ways (see Section 6):

- a. Project supervision, direction and policy-setting responsibilities should revert to the small, formal **TPR** (MNE, UNDP, MFE).
- b. The **NPD** and PSC Chair should be enabled to fulfil his second, pivotal function more pro-actively (i.e. policy and institutional linkage between ASP, MNE and GoM).
- c. The **PSC** should be asked to concentrate more fully on its primary, "outwards" set of responsibilities, to focus the PSC agenda on the key strategic, policy and programme issues concerning conservation, NRM and sustainable development.

**MTE Recommendation (8)** is to strengthen the Project Steering Committee so that it can more effectively carry out its original mandate (see Section 6).

# 4.2.4 Human Resources

# 4.2.4.1 Project Delivery

Over the past four years (2005-2008), MNE and UNDP<sup>7</sup> between them have contracted a team of project staff who have established, furnished and equipped a main office – initially in Khovd *aimag* centre, recently re-located to Ulaanbaatar – and four project field offices (Project Implementation Unit). Three of these are in the target *aimag* centres of Khovd, Uvs, and Bayan Olgii. However, one is in Khatgal *sum* centre but should be in the *aimag* centre of Khovsgol. Project implementation is led by a National Project Manager and the four PIU Coordinators. The main field staff are called Social Mobilisers (SMs) and are based at the centres of the project's target *sums*, each working alone from a home office and equipped with a motorbike.

# 4.2.4.2 Project staff

The staff complement at the time of the MTE was as noted in Table 4, with a total of 47 fulltime positions including 5 current vacancies, distributed between one main office, the four target *aimag* centres, and 20 target *sum* centres. This staff complement is in accordance with the Project Brief, apart from the following: the ITA left the project in July 2008 at the end of his one year contract and the post remains vacant. He was taken on in August as Landscape and Biodiversity Conservation Adviser. An experienced National Landscape Planning Consultant was recruited shortly afterwards for a 10 month period. Neither of the UNVs has been appointed; and two additional *sums* joined the project in 2007, bringing the total to 20 Social Mobilisers (whereas 15 were specified in the Project Document). Since the project was designed 6 years ago, there does not appear to have been any critical review or adjustment made to the project staff complement, apart from a few individual changes made in 2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> All staff are contracted by MNE, apart from the National Project Manager and the Finance Officer, both of whom have direct contracts with UNDP Mongolia.

Office	Position					
Main Project	Main Project Office					
	National Project Manager (started November 2008)					
	Administrator					
	Finance Officer					
	International Technical Advisor (vacant since June 2008)					
	Training and Community Development Officer (started May 2008)					
	Research Officer (vacant)					
	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer (started November 2008)					
	Interpreter – translator (vacant)					
	Drivers (2)					
Aimag Projec	ct Implementation Units (4)					
	PIU Coordinator (4)					
	Community Empowerment & Development Officer (4)					
	Administration & Finance Assistant (4)					
	Drivers (4)					
	International UNV on Research (vacant)					
	International UNV on CBNRM (vacant)					
Sum home-offices (20)						
	Social Mobiliser (20)					

 Table 4. Project staff complement, November 2008

MTE recommendations (9.1) are for the NPM to review and revise the project staff complement and position descriptions to ensure that the planned Output teams are led by staff with a sound understanding of the project as a whole and of the Output in particular, and that the Revised Outcomes can be realised (see Section 6). MTE recommendation (9.2) is for careful review of (a) staff employment conditions and (b) the rates of pay on offer for new short term contract workers. MTE recommendation (9.3) is for project management to plan and implement a more systematic program of professional development for all interested staff members. MTE recommendation (9.4) is to provide the project with a much larger Project Office in Ulaanbaatar with immediate effect (see Section 6).

## 4.2.4.3 Human resource management

There is a large cadre of staff many of whom have little understanding of the project or its functions. **MTE recommendation (3)** is to appoint a number of lead and thematic experts on a short-term or part-time basis with responsibility for driving the implementation of key project outputs forward and training project staff. Lead and thematic experts will have a proven and outstanding track record in required fields (see Section 6).

A number of issues were noted during the MTE mission with regard to staff employment conditions which, in total, appear to be having an impact on individuals' morale, satisfaction and performance. The MTE notes also that there have been recent improvements made to some employment conditions<sup>8</sup> but not all issues have been addressed. There are some general frustrations with the management and leadership of the project and of the roles and tasks that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> In 2007 and 2008, some job descriptions were revised; the overall team composition was strengthened; pay rates and equipment were improved.

staff are to perform. Decision-making appears to have been inflexible and top-down in style rather than collegial. The MTE were informed that the training officer is used as an office assistant. The ASP staff are in a similar position to other "project staff", not attached properly to any permanent institution. They are not employees but short term contract workers. There is widespread dissatisfaction with the rates of pay, DSA rates, and the policy of not paying employment insurance (pension) or health insurance. There have been a disconcerting number of NPMs and other staff whose tenure has been short-lived.

One unanticipated problem was the effect of locating the head office in Khovd *aimag* centre. This proved problematic for a number of reasons. As a communication centre for the project, Khovd suffers from a number of disadvantages as compared with Ulaanbaatar, and partly for this reason Khovsgol became isolated from the rest of the project. Secondly the project was unable to find highly trained staff who were prepared to work in Khovd for the UNDP salary offered. Thirdly, the ITA and other senior staff were unable to interact with project partners who are mostly based in the capital. The recent relocation of the project to Ulaanbaatar should improve matters.

However the advantages brought on by the move to UB have been more than offset by the workplace facilities provided which are very poor. The UB office is far too small and the facilities inadequate: it is another indication of a lack of regard for the project and its staff – perhaps its most important asset. It seems likely that the poor conditions and the invidious policy of one-year contracting are deterring some high quality candidates from applying for positions with the project.

# 4.2.5 Project Management

## 4.2.5.1 Project Implementation Approach

Implementation of the AS project was started in 2004-05 using funds from UNDP and the Dutch Government, but a formal launch and inception exercise were organised only in early 2007 when GEF funds became available. The approach followed by the project to date has been organised around preparation and subsequent execution of a detailed Work Plan and Budget (WPB). The WPB is prepared annually and quarterly by the main project office (NPM and staff) from inputs proposed by the four *aimag* PIU teams; submitted to MNE, UNDP CO and the PSC for approval; and then carried out and reported against by the project team. Funds are released quarterly by UNDP CO on receipt of quarterly reports on progress and expenditure, and of the plan and budget for the next quarter's activities. All activities and expenditure have been organised directly by the project staff or on the project's behalf by UNDP CO (for example in the purchase of items of equipment or consultancies).

The WPB is a detailed schedule of activities and cost items under each of the 6 planned "Outputs". The structure of the 2008 WPB is summarised in Table 5, indicating that it was based on the project logical framework but incorporates a number of changes and considerably more detail. In the 2008 work plan, the 6 LF Outputs are re-phrased as "Outcomes", and a new series of 23 "Outputs" has been generated. These have been sub-divided into 44 Activities; 94 Sub-Activities; 177 "Details" and >300 budgetary "line items".

Objective level	No. Items
"Outcomes"	6
"Outputs"	23
"Activities"	44
Sub-Activities	94
Sub-Activity Details	177
Sub-Details/ Line items	>300

Table 5. Structure of the ASP 2008 Work Plan

It is a concern for the MTE that this highly-detailed Work plan and budget seems to be the only planning, management and monitoring tool used by the ASP management. The MTE considers that the project's reliance solely on the unwieldy WPB is likely to make implementation inefficient; the WPB may be useful for detailed monitoring of expenditure, but is of little use for the strategic management of the project or its budget, towards achieving the required results. In the absence of any broader plan or monitoring framework, there must be a tendency for all those supervising and directing the project (PSC, UNDP, NPD, NPM) to become pre-occupied with micro-managing very low levels of activity and very small amounts of funds.

Unfortunately, the project logical framework itself has not been developed or adapted over the past 4-6 years beyond the 6 major "LF Outcomes"), and so remains of little use to project management. Unfortunately too, the 23 additional "Outputs" in the WPB are likewise not well formulated (see Table 6): there are too many in total for efficient management, and they are not framed at a consistent middle-level; some are relatively minor parts of activities, too narrowly sub-divided, while others are significant outputs. Most refer to processes rather than to SMART, focussed results.

# 4.2.5.2 Adaptive management

Project implementation has been administered through the annual Work Plan and Budget, and any "adaptive management" of the project has been based on the annual report on activities and expenditure prepared against the WPB; i.e. adjustments are included in the next year's WPB. Again, the lack of a useful logical framework specifying the key set of mid-level, multi-year Outputs has hindered introduction of a systematic strategy for adaptive management. It is notable that up to the time of the MTE, the project's logical framework had not been "adapted" into a form that is useful for management or supervision, or used by the project staff as the principal guide for project planning, implementation or monitoring. For instance, indicators of milestones in the logframe should be translated into targets in the workplan.

The MTE notes that the ASP's confused start, in 2005 <u>and</u> 2007, contributed to the poor organisation of adaptive management. "Inception" of the project was not organised until 2007, by which time project implementation had been under way for two years, but without having had a proper inception phase. For a large, complex project, it is good practice to initiate implementation (and the systematic approach of adaptive management) with a rigorous inception phase, during which key tasks should be completed, including (a) developing the LF into a useful, up-to-date form; (b) devising the project's monitoring,

information, reporting and evaluation (MIRE) system (based on the revised LF); (c) organising the main tools for project implementation and administration (Table 13, Section 6.2.1), based on the revised LF; and (d) starting to develop the required capacities of the new project team. Besides being two years overdue, it is apparent that the ASP inception was limited to a formal project launch plus confirmation of the administrative procedures to be followed, and in March 2008, development of a new logframe.

## 4.2.6 **Project Monitoring and Evaluation**

Responsibility for managing and directing the Altai Sayan Project lies with the NPM, to whom the project staff report, and the NPD, a senior official of MNE, who works in conjunction with the PSC and TPR, on both of which UNDP Mongolia is a member. For project M&E purposes, progress with implementation is recorded by means of quarterly and annual activity and expenditure reports, prepared by the NPM and staff, and submitted to the NPD, TPR and PSC. Such reports have been produced for each year of the Altai Sayan project to date. The UNDP CO and MNE have also organised periodic joint inspection missions to project field sites. In addition, the ITA has produced progress reports and monthly updates. There have also been semi-annual reports to the Dutch Government and separate annual project reviews to UNDP-GEF. The Project Document specifies a number of additional M&E measures, including (a) annual external evaluations for the project's lifetime; (b) annual participatory evaluation exercises with key stakeholders (local communities, NGOs and partner organizations); and (c) annual inputs by an adaptive management advisor. These additional measures do not seem to have been in operation.

Although the project has generated numerous periodic reports, it is not clear what analysis and evaluation of the periodic reports have been carried out by the oversight bodies. As noted elsewhere in this report, planning, implementation and monitoring of the ASP have not been straightforward, both because of the staggered start to project approvals and disbursements by the three contributing donors, and because the staggered start was not reflected in the project work plan and budget plan. The ITA has commented on these discrepancies but there does not appear to have been any comment by the NPD, TPR or PSC, or feedback by them to the project management suggesting adjustments to the budget, logical framework or future work plans.

From the Project Document, it is clear that the project's logical framework is intended to serve as the principal tool for M&E of the substantive biodiversity and socio-economic aspects of the project, and the performance of the project itself. This is good management practice, but depends upon the preparation and development of a good quality logical framework, (objectives, indicators, targets, milestones and risks), which unfortunately is not the case for ASP. The Midterm Evaluation itself was constrained by the poorly-developed project plan and LF. As specified in the Project Document, both of the independent evaluations (the MTE and Final Evaluation) "will (aim to) match project progress against predetermined success indicators. It will be necessary to reduce the large number of indicators in the March 2008 draft logframe before this is feasible.

# 4.2.7 Stakeholder Participation

The Altai Sayan Project is implemented at a full range of political levels, from international and national, to *aimag, sum* and local. Table 6 summarises the main groups of stakeholders relevant to the project at each level. A key consideration for the project's efficiency and

effectiveness at each of these levels is the degree to which stakeholders are participating in the substantive work of the project.

Political level	Stakeholders relevant to ASP
International	Government officials in Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan and China
	Counterpart managers in Altai Sayan eco-region programs
National	National politicians; representatives of A-S electorates
	<ul> <li>National government officials – policy makers and planners in MNE, MFE, MFAg, M.Industry</li> </ul>
	Private sector company directors
	• Finance institutions (banks)
	Offices of international aid agencies
	NGO directors
	Other projects
Aimag and Altai-	Regional development planners
Sayan Region	Aimag governors and members of parliament
(Bayan-Olgii, Khovd, Uvs,	<ul> <li>Aimag officials – in NRM (agriculture, land, water, environment, wildlife)</li> </ul>
Khovsgol)	Private sector (inc. banks) managers
	NGO managers
	Schools and student groups
	Other projects
	General public
Sum and bagh	• Sum governors and members of parliament
	• Sum officials – in NRM (agriculture, land, water, environment, wildlife)
	Community-based organisations (CBOs), NGOs, associations
	Schools and student groups
	Other projects
	General public
Local	• Households
	Community organisations (CBOs), NGOs, associations
	Other projects
	General public

Table 6. Altai Sayan Project – relevant stakeholders

Given the extensive range of relevant stakeholders, it is clearly a major challenge for the project to facilitate and ensure adequate degrees of participation. Its efforts have been concentrated primarily at *aimag*, and secondarily at local levels making use of the presence of project units in the four target *aimag* centres and in the 20 target *sums*. From meetings organised for the MTE in the four *aimag* centres and in a selection of *sum* centres, it is apparent that the Altai Sayan project is reasonably well known in these locations and has been actively engaged with the governors and government officials and with local institutions such as schools and NGOs in carrying out project activities. There has been less engagement of the project with national stakeholders or with international counterparts in the countries bordering Mongolia's Altai and Sayan regions. Table 7 identifies the key stakeholder groups for each of the ASP's current 6 main outputs.

Most of ASP's actions with stakeholders to date appear to entail handing out equipment, grants and training courses with no clear strategy or innovative system in mind. However, some excellent results have been achieved by the project in its work with schools and students in supporting eco-clubs and raising awareness about environmental issues. Similarly, "information centres" have been developed in a number of *aimag*, *sum* and *bagh* centres and are serving a useful community-strengthening function. The project has also provided direct support to government offices involved in land management, environment, protected areas, and agriculture, in each of the target *aimas* and *sums*. Much of this support has been in the form of organising training exercises for staff and in providing them with upgraded equipment, vehicles, uniforms and so on.

The assessment of the MTE is that these forms of project engagement with key stakeholders at aimag, sum and other levels do not amount to adequate stakeholder participation in the project. The Altai Sayan project has a fundamental challenge in that its core strategy is to build the capacities of the key groups of stakeholders so that they undertake the required conservation and development actions required to achieve the planned results and outcomes. Thus the role of the ASP staff is not to manage natural resources, conserve pasture and forest, develop alternative livelihoods, monitor wildlife, or reform conservation policy and institutions. Rather, the principal task of the project and staff is to facilitate these actions by the various major stakeholders. The ASP staff need to work together with stakeholders and where necessary meet their requirements by providing expertise from consultants, training and equipment. In this critical way, the objective is to assist the stakeholders to form and strengthen the long-term system for conservation and sustainable development of Altai Sayan, rather than believing that the project itself is conserving the wildlife. MTE **recommendation** (4) is for the project management to make the identified stakeholders the central participants in each of the project components, and to plan and organise project activities so that they are implemented primarily by the participants, with facilitation, empowerment and assistance from the ASP (see Section 6).

For example, a priority objective of the project (current Output 1) is to bring about reform of the several government agencies responsible for management and conservation of the environment and natural resources, so that they work in a fully-integrated manner across their "sectors". These reforms are going to require actions by the national, *aimag* and *sum* governments and their planners and policy- and law-makers; and with the support of the ASP, facilitating the drafting of policy papers; and enabling lead agency officials to develop the necessary capacities and work out how they are going to work differently with one another, towards the common objectives of conservation and sustainable use of resources.

Substantive components	Key participants
1. Institution & policy development	GoM: MNE and other Ministries – policy and planning staff <i>Aimag</i> and <i>sum</i> governors and government NRM agencies (LMA, PAA, EPA, Agriculture, etc.) Herder community organisations
2. Information management	Local government NRM agencies Research and educational institutions Community organisations
3. Landscape conservation	NRM agencies Herder community organisations
4. Trans-boundary conservation	Government delegates – Mongolia, Russia, China, and Kazakhstan NRM agencies Herder community organisations
5. Livelihoods development	Local governments NRM agencies Herder community organisations Finance institutions Enterprise support agencies.

Table 7.	Key participants	in the project's	substantive main	components

This type of approach, one of facilitation and capacity development, needs to be applied to each of the project's outcomes and outputs. Another important example is the local community of herders, who need to be placed at the centre of the proposed planning and introduction of "community-based natural resource management", which should be one of the cornerstones of the envisaged Altai Sayan conservation strategy. Community members themselves should be the main participants and beneficiaries, being taught how to prepare and "own" the community-based NRM plans – in each *bagh*, *sum* and *aimag* – and subsequently organising NRM actions. The role of the Altai Sayan project is to facilitate, guide and act as a resource for the community participatory process, and this should include assisting and guiding local government officials to develop their capacities to provide their support to the community-centred process. Indeed, the ASP has recently begun to involve stakeholders properly in the landscape planning process as part of its Biodiversity Conservation Strategy development.

## 4.2.8 Sustainability and Replication

Important criteria for project evaluation are the degree to which the conservation system reforms introduced by the project are likely to be sustained beyond the life and budget of the project; and the measures taken by the project to enable the successful aspects of the project initiative to be replicated, beyond the project time-frame, geographic area, or home institutions. The impression gained by the MTE is that to date there has not been sufficient thinking or planning done by project management and staff for sustainability and replication. **MTE recommendation (11)** is for the project management to prepare simple strategies for sustainability and replication, as part of re-planning the project logical framework, budget and 3-year implementation plan, immediately following the MTE (see Section 6).

# 4.3 **Project Finances**

# 4.3.1 Budget

The Altai Sayan Project was planned for a duration of 5 years, with an overall budget of \$11 million. The multiple source s and their contributions to the budget are listed in Table 8. GEF financing comprises \$2.72 m, 24% of the total, and co-financing amounts to \$8.52 m, 76% of the total. The project document and budget plan make a further distinction between the funds that are to be managed by the UNDP Mongolia Country Office, a total of \$4.83 m (43% of the total) from GEF, the Dutch Government and UNDP itself; and those that will be managed separately by partner agencies. These include a combined commitment of \$2.4 m (21%) from the two key GoM Ministries (MNE and MFAg), \$1.5 m (13%) from WWF Mongolia, \$1.73 (15%) from ADB, and \$0.75 m (7%) from IFAD.

In reality, the Altai Sayan project as planned and implemented covers only the \$4.83 m of funds, less than \$1 m per year, that were placed under the management of the UNDP CO. Importantly, this includes the Dutch Government's contribution as well as UNDP's and the GEF's. Thus, for the purposes of this evaluation, the Altai Sayan Project is considered to be only the activities funded by the GEF, UNDP and Dutch Government, rather than the broader package with \$11.24 m funding.

The activities planned for the Altai Sayan Project by the other "co-financing" agencies are not included in the ASP project document, project logical framework or work programme, and their funds are not accounted for by the project. While this is the standard practice for GEF project co-financing, it is unfortunate, as it means that there is no common platform for planning, managing, reporting or evaluating the efforts of the various agencies to strengthen conservation and sustainable development in the Altai Sayan region. It is apparent from the project's progress reports and the MTE mission that the Altai Sayan Project and the other agencies' projects and activities have little or no connection with one another.

Funding source	Funding commitment (US\$ millions)
GEF	2.72
UNDP (TRAC) <sup>9</sup>	0.24
Dutch Government <sup>8</sup>	1.87
Total UNDP-managed funds	4.83
WWF <sup>10</sup>	1.50
ADB <sup>9</sup>	1.73
Ministry of Nature and Environment9	0.83
Ministry of Food and Agriculture9	1.60
IFAD <sup>9</sup>	0.75
Total partner-managed funds	6.41
Total Project funds	11.24

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Cash co-financing (UNDP-managed)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Cash co-financing (partner-managed)

A portion of the GEF funds was used by UNDP and GoM to organise a project formulation exercise in the period 2000 to 2002, and to prepare the Project Brief. The Dutch Government approved a project plan and financing in November 2004, and disbursed funds to UNDP for the project commencing in early 2005. Apparently UNDP's own disbursements commenced in 2004, prior to either Dutch funding or GEF approval. The GEF approved the project only in late 2006, and disbursed its first funds to UNDP in February 2007. These different approval and disbursement dates by the three agencies resulted in a highly staggered start to the project, which was inefficient and ineffective. The full budget became available only at the start of 2007, but by then 44% of the Dutch Government funds and 101% of the UNDP funds had been disbursed.

The MTE notes that this confused start to the project and fund disbursements is not reflected in the formal Project Document agreement that was signed by the Government of Mongolia and UNDP in December 2006, with the Project Brief (dated 2004) attached as the main annex A. The Project Document specifies the project period as 2007 to 2011, and includes a detailed "Total Project Work Plan and Budget" showing the planned project costs over this period. The funding to be made available by the three donor agencies each year from 2007 to 2011 was as summarised in Table 9, with no indication that Dutch Government and UNDP funds (amounting together to over 20% of the total budget) had already been disbursed and spent by the project in 2005 and 2006.

Source US\$	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Totals
Dutch Government	0	311,201	435,217	456,307	382,749	280,198	1,865,672
UNDP	25,348	26,812	42,400	42,400	31,400	31,640	200,000
GEF	0	318,650	684,650	666,000	572,600	478,100	2,720,000
Totals	25,348	656,663	1,162,267	1,164,707	986,749	789,938	4,785,672

Table 9. Project Budget – Summary of Funds, Project Document (2006)

A summary of the budgetary allocations to each of the 6 planned Outputs is included in Table 10. Major portions of the funds are allocated to Output 3, Landscape-based conservation (\$1.34 m, 28%) and Output 5, Conservation and livelihoods (\$1.35 m, 28%). Significant funding is allocated to planned Output 6, Project monitoring, evaluation & adaptive management (\$0.85 m, 18%), and Output 2, Information management (\$0.61 m, 13%). Relatively minor allocations are made to Output 1, Institutional & policy development (\$0.43 m, 9%) and Output 4, Trans-boundary conservation (\$0.2 m, 4%).

Planned Output		Budget con	tribution			
	US	S GEF	Dutch	UNDP	Totals	%
0.1	Institutions & policy development	385,000	49,875	0	434,875	9
O.2	Information management	525,000	89,250	0	614,250	13
O.3	Landscape-based conservation	1,280,000	63,000	0	1,343,000	28
O.4	Trans-boundary conservation	130,000	15,750	50,000	195,750	4
O.5	Conservation and livelihoods	105,000	1,143,450	100,000	1,348,450	28
0.6	Project management, m&e	295,000	504,347	50,000	849,347	18
	Totals	2,720,000	1,865,672	200,000	4,785,672	10
	%	57	39	4	100	

 Table 10. Budget allocations to planned Outputs

Overall, the GEF's contribution is 57% of the budget, the Dutch Government's is 39% and UNDP's is 4%. As illustrated in Figure 7, the contribution from each of the three sources of funding was earmarked to specific portions of the project rather than to an integrated budget. Most notably, Outputs 1, 2 and 3 were to be funded primarily by the GEF (89%, 85% and 95% respectively), while the bulk of the funding (85%) for Output 5 was to be provided by the Dutch Government. A surprising proportion (59%) of the funding for Output 6 was also earmarked to the Dutch Government. The Project Document specifies further that "The costs of programme staff will be shared between GEF, Dutch Government and UNDP. (Main office and support staff) will be funded by GEF. Funding for (Aimag PIU staff) will be from the Dutch Government."

The MTE considers that such earmarking of the project budget is not appropriate, as it presents a potential complication for management and even giving different objectives or slants to the different donors. The project and budget are designed as an integral package, which would be ineffective if implemented in separate or unsynchronised portions. Similarly, the project staff complement is planned as a complete team, not two half teams. Each donor should be contributing to the overall package, and interested in the results and impacts achieved by the whole project. Fortunately, this is what has occurred in practice with the Altai Sayan Project, even though there was a gap of two years between funds becoming available from the three donors.



Figure 7. Budget allocations to Outputs, by donor

# 4.3.2 Project Expenditure, 2004 - 2008

As noted above, the Altai Sayan project had a highly staggered start, with Dutch Government and UNDP funding being available in 2004 and 2005, prior to the project being approved by the GEF, and GEF funds being available only from early 2007. Expenditure data provided to the MTE is summarised in Table 11. It indicates that from 2004 to October 2008, total expenditure was \$2.08 million, 44% of the overall budget. Expenditure was low in 2004 and 2005, increased to \$0.66 m in 2006 and \$0.67 m in 2007, then decreased again in 2008 to \$0.39 m (not including November and December expenditure). If the duration of implementation (2004 to October 2008) is considered to be four years, average annual expenditure has equalled \$0.52 m, not much more than half of the planned expenditure of \$0.96 m per year.

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Project Expenditure US\$ Outputs		2004-05 <sup>12</sup>	2006	2007	2008 Jan-Oct	<b>Totals</b> to date	%	Balance
1	Institution & policy dev.	31,667	25,780	49,787	26,827	134,061	31	300,814
2	Information mgt.	4,986	53,050	37,957	16,835	112,828	18	501,422
3	Landscape con.	77,484	139,307	161,883	105,440	484,114	36	858,886
4	Trans-boundary con.	1,240	11,827	13,494	7,029	33,590	17	162,160
5	Livelihoods	16,730	204,336	153,185	21,662	395,913	29	952,537
6	M&E, project mgt.	231,553	221,303	257,471	212,909	923,236	109	-73,889
	Totals	363,660	655,603	673,777	390,702	2,083,742	44	2,701,930

Table 11. Project Expenditure by Output, 2004-05 to October 2008<sup>11</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> It should be emphasized that the MTE were not able to check or validate the accounts that make up this table.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Expenditure in 2004 was relatively minor and is combined with 2005 in this table.

If all had gone according to the original plan, after 4 years of the 5-year project, expenditure on each Output should have been roughly 80%. In practice, reported expenditure has been slow and uneven across the five substantive project Outputs (1. to 5.), as illustrated in Figure 8: only 17-18% of the planned budgets for Outputs 2 and 4 have been disbursed; and 29-36% of the budgets for Outputs 1, 3 and 5. In contrast, the budget for Output 6 has been overspent, with 109% of the funds disbursed by October 2008.



Figure 8. Outputs budget and expenditure, 2004-05 to 2008

The MTE observes that expenditure items have not been attributed properly to each component. Instead, the easier option has been followed, of lumping together virtually all expenditure on "project management activities" under Output 6. Thus staff costs and operating costs have been recorded under Output 6, whereas they should have been recorded against the Output(s) to which the activity was contributing. Only a small core of general management actions should be accounted for under Output 6.

The first lesson that may be drawn is that the project M&E system needs to properly assess the administration and accounting of funds. A second lesson that may be drawn is that during the project planning and design process, and through subsequent revisions of the implementation plan (adaptive management), the nature of each component and Output should be developed very clearly. This would enable the anticipated costs of achieving each Output to be estimated more thoroughly, and the budget to be allocated accordingly across the Outputs. This issue is discussed further under Project Design. **MTE recommendation** (10) is for the project management to prepare, use, monitor and report against a fresh Outputs budget, for each financial quarter and year, for the remainder of the project (see Section 6).

The MTE was advised that, as only the Dutch Government and UNDP funds were available in 2005 and 2006, they were used across all components of the project, and not in accordance with the donors' intentions to support specific outputs only. Apparently the Dutch Government questioned this practice, but presumably the UNDP CO advised that it was impracticable for the budget to be managed in any other way, given the fact that the GEF funding did not commence until two years after the Dutch Government and UNDP. However, given the other effects of the staggered start on the project's inception and implementation, the MTE considers that it would have been prudent to have postponed the start until all donors' funds were available, and then to have launched and implemented the project in a fully concerted manner.

# 4.4 **Project Results**

The Altai Sayan project had been under implementation for 4 years prior to the mid-term evaluation. This section evaluates the achievements to date noted by the MTE for each of the 5 substantive components:

Output 1	<b>Institution and policy development</b> Biodiversity conservation mainstreamed into Altai Sayan development institutions
Output 2	<b>Information management</b> Information baseline established and strengthened as basis for integrating conservation into development
Output 3	Landscape conservation Landscape-based approach to conservation established and operational
Output 4	<b>Transboundary conservation</b> Strengthened transboundary conservation action and institutional linkages
Output 5	<b>Livelihoods development</b> Community livelihoods developed on the basis of sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity conservation.

The Altai Sayan Project Outputs and associated Activities are listed in Section 2.5; an interpretation of the outputs by the MTE is given in Table 3 (Section 4.1.3).

## 4.4.1 Output 1. Institution and policy development

The first output is concerned with mainstreaming biodiversity into government and community institutions. Under this project component, the intention was for the project to work with and strengthen the aimag Sustainable Development Councils (SDCs) that were set up under Agenda 21. The SDCs were viewed as potentially the most useful local institution for the project to support, with the aim of ensuring an integrated approach to the governance of natural resources and the environment. The project did some work with the SDCs in 2005 and 2006 but this did not lead anywhere, and the Councils are now defunct. The ITA advised repeatedly that the ASP drop the work with the SDCs, as did the 2007-2008 PIR/APR, and instead all recommended working cross-sectorally with the various government agencies including industry and infrastructure.

Instead of working with the SDCs, the Altai Sayan project has developed good connections with individual government offices and NGOs active in each of the *aimags* and *sums* in which it is working. It is apparent from the ME's discussions that many of the participating *aimag* and *sum* governments are interested in institutional reform towards integration of natural resource management efforts (across land, agriculture, forestry, water, wildlife and environment management "sectors"). However, to date the project has provided little guidance or support towards reforms in this direction. The project appears to have reverted to simply supporting the existing government institutions in their separate activities – EPA, MFAg, MNE, Ministry of Roads, Transportation, Construction and Urban Development,

LMA, etc. – and its engagement has been limited to providing equipment, vehicles, uniforms etc. to government offices, and a variety of technical trainings to each of the agencies.

The project has been active in supporting institutional development at local community level, by encouraging the formation of Herder Groups, following the introduction of new regulations by MNE in 2006. More than 70 HGs have been established by the project in the 4 *aimags*. Although not all remain active, this is commendable as perhaps the most significant result achieved to date by the project, and is a reflection of the time and energy invested by the main corps of project field staff, the CEDOs and Social Mobilisers. However, based on its observations, the MTE has a serious concern that the Herder Groups being established are not suitable institutions for the project's purpose of facilitating community-based natural resource management<sup>13</sup>. Further details on the Herder Groups are given under Output 5.

The project seems to have supported implementation of the 2006 MNE regulations in an unquestioning manner, and in the view of the MTE, has been misguided. The main issue is that the HGs are not democratic, inclusive bodies incorporating all stakeholders interested in an area (of land, forest or water). The MNE regulations stipulate only the minimum number of herder households (10) who can form a Group, and then be granted priority use rights and responsibilities over a designated area of land, a maximum of 10,000 hectares. This is not an appropriate basis for equitable, participatory decision-making about the future use and conservation of shared natural resources. On the other hand, the MTE considers that the Herder Groups established with ASP support could be useful entities for small enterprise development, which is the main interest of some of the HGs that have been formed.

Comment: Activities reported under Output 1 overlap with those of Outputs 3 & 5.

*Comment:* A few of the herder groups are achieving good results (see Output 5) but many others have received little effective support from the project and are having difficulty in developing strong organisations with effective activities.

*Comment:* The project needs to develop a strategy for working with *aimag* offices that is not severely disrupted by political elections.

**Key issue:** <u>Herder Groups not a fully appropriate model.</u> There is an outstanding issue for the Altai Sayan project to advise MNE that its 2006 regulations for herder groups are not a fully appropriate model and require modifications before being promoted and used further. Some herder groups, for instance, are taking advantage of the Law on Environmental Protection to gain exclusive rights to valuable resources. To date, the project has not worked on reforming national policies or legislation in support of community-based or integrated natural resource management. Important policy actions by the ASP have been only to support conventional land use planning by *aimag* and *sum* agencies, with the aim of incorporating "biodiversity considerations".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The ME's concerns are fully borne out by a commissioned study of the project's work with Herder Groups, the results of which were submitted during the midterm evaluation by the authors, Community Conservation Network (CoCoNet) of Mongolia.

# 4.4.2 Output 2 - Information Management

The second output is concerned with establishing an information baseline on biodiversity and the use of natural resources. The project has organised activities in three main directions – (a) commissioning research, especially into the population sizes of the main "landscape" species of wildlife; (b) general environment awareness-raising among the public and school students in the Altai Sayan *aimags*; and (c) organising a baseline of information on natural resources and biodiversity so that it is available for decision-making, planning and policy development. The project has also paid for improved information technology, for surveillance, survey and mapping work especially, in the offices of the land management agency, EPA, PAA, and the Border Protection Unit but with little obvious impact on project objectives.

These activities have produced some good results, particularly in raising awareness about environmental issues in schools and eco-clubs, and in community-strengthening by developing "information centres" in a number of *aimag*, *sum* and *bagh* centres. Mention should also be made of the training given on responsible mining in the project target areas, which was organised in cooperation with Asia Foundation and which has been well received according to the local teams. Nevertheless the MTE considers that the studies, surveys and activities commissioned by ASP have been insufficient to establish a proper baseline of information for the project.

# 4.4.2.1 Biodiversity Studies and Surveys:

Scientists from the Academy of Science, NUM, and elsewhere in Mongolia were contracted to undertake biodiversity studies in 2005/06. These were published by the project in book form and as PowerPoint presentations on a CD. Several of the studies involved prominent species that are important constituents of the regional biodiversity in the Altai and Sayan Mountains of Mongolia, together with a few additional studies on ecological or conservation issues with relevance to biodiversity. Most of the studies were short-term and consisted of reviews of previous work, and brief field visits. A summary of the research studies undertaken by the project is provided in Annex 6.

The project has obtained information on the status of various natural resources, mostly from the data holdings in *sum* and *aimag* Government offices. A summary of these findings is provided in this section. As yet, these data have not been integrated into a strategy to guide interventions on natural resource use and biodiversity conservation.

*Pasture:* The general state of pastureland in the Altai Sayan ecoregion is reported in Section 1.2.3. Pasture biomass was estimated in 2004 and 2005 for the four aimags (Annex 6), but it is evident from the state of an exclosure observed in Bayan Olgii that the project is no longer monitoring the pasture. No other source of information on pasture biomass, plant cover or species composition was uncovered in the time available.

Herders are concerned about the decline in pasture biomass. Their response has been: (a) to continue, or in some cases reinstate, traditional nomadic husbandry involving a rotational grazing between seasonal pastures<sup>14</sup>; (b) demarcate hay fields by fencing or constructing walls, and (c) develop new hayfields by irrigation (creating new water channels) or clearing stones from fields. However these solutions were not sufficient to counter the trend towards desertification in the *aimag*. The project needs to work with the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> This year with dzud conditions (winter 2008/09), some herders have remained on summer pastures in Altai Tavan Bogd NP due to intense grazing pressure near to the *sum* centre

herders to look critically at what is going on and find an agreed and equitable means of getting the balance right, essentially this reduces to a balance between economic benefits and ecological protection of natural resources.

*Forests:* The use of forests in the Altai Sayan eco-region is reported in Section 1.2.3. The project has gathered official information on the area of forests in each project *sum* and on their classification. MNE sets the official legal offtake of timber. This is approved locally and the *sum* office issues offtake quotas for wood (e.g. allowances for house construction and fuel wood) and monitors compliance to the quotas with State Environmental Inspectors. According to the director of PAA in Bayan Olgii, the MNE records indicate that the local forests are in a satisfactory state. However an inspection by one of the government forest inspection units indicates a significant decline in the forests of Bayan Olgii (MNE 2001). Furthermore the condition of the forest is reportedly similar within and outside protected areas.

According to recent changes and amendments to the Law on Forest (ratified May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007) and the Minister for Nature and Environment's Order No 114 of 2006, "local communities and forest user groups may participate in protecting, utilising and possessing certain types of natural resource in specified parts of the national forest reserve". Of particular importance for the project is the policy on forest cleaning activities. It aims to 'clean the forest from dead and fallen trees, and improve the mercantile quality of the forest' (RSEM 2006-2007). The Minister for Nature and Environment's Order No 193 serves to intensify these forest cleaning activities. However it is just this presence of old, dead-standing and dead-fallen trees which provides the most important habitat for biodiversity. Examples of such habitats are nesting holes in tree trunks, passages under dry bark, cavities within rotting wood and a variety of dead wood substrates (utilised by numerous fungi that are themselves often associated with specialised insects). Furthermore the deep litter layer of a mature forest also provides cover for many species such as fungi, insects and salamanders.

The Altai Sayan Project does not appear to be collecting any independent information on the area of forest remaining, the intensity of use, or its level of damage. The project needs to begin collecting these data. It also needs to assess and compare biodiversity in areas of cleaned and uncleaned forest and in areas within and outside protected areas, and make recommendations accordingly.

*Fisheries:* The project has not yet gathered any information on the catch of commercial fish species (either in terms of the quantity of fish per annum or the average size of fish caught) from the Khovsgol lakes and rivers. It has however prepared an excellent technical analysis on the advisability of breeding Taimen in net pens or hatcheries along the Shiskhed River (Laurie 2008). The analysis concludes that hatcheries would only be required where natural spawning areas have been destroyed or migration routes blocked by dams.

The MTE considers that a hatchery might also help in the case of a complete collapse in the adult fish population in which case any activity that increased juvenile survival could be beneficial. There is a belief amongst local fishermen that the size of the adult Taimen fish has indeed been decreasing. One possible cause is excessive net fishing which could potentially cause the fisheries to collapse. As the project has no data on catch rate or catch size. the MTE could not test this assertion directly. In the absence of project data, the evaluators sort indirect evidence of the state of the Taimen fishery. Taimen are long lived and the large adult fish produce the greatest amount of eggs and therefore the greatest proportion of surviving fish. The fishing outfitter Ingol provides trophy statistics on their web page. Comparing fish taken from the 12 fishing sites within the project region since 2005, the 3rd largest fish ever captured has been from the Shisked river (in 2007). Overall, 41% of the top ten largest fish have been captured in the Shisked/Tengis rivers since 2005. Furthermore the information on fly fishing trophy catches indicates that 4 of the 5 top ten Taimen caught using fly fishing techniques have come from the Tengis/Shisked watershed. These data are indicative only but they do not support the suggestion that the size of adult Taimen fish is decreasing or the suggestion that the recommendation by Laurie (2008) - that hatcheries should not be supported at the present time.

*Argali and other Key Species:* The project is focussed on Snow leopard and Argali which are umbrella species for high mountain pastures and rocky habitats. These are important species but <u>they do not begin to represent the range of biodiversity of the Altrai and Sayan Mountains</u>. For instance they are almost completely absent from the important Ulaan taiga regions of Khovsgol which contain other key species, such as moose, red deer, wild reindeer, brown bear, wolf, wolverine, otter, flying and red squirrels. Eagles, vultures, eagle owls and other raptors are also key species often with a widespread but low density distribution.

It is important to distinguish between biodiversity surveys that provide the project with information on the range of species present in the mountain areas versus the more detailed studies of individual key species which will provide additional information on the threats to biodiversity and the status and population trends of that key species. The Project Document calls for both kinds of information.

The Altai Sayan Project has commissioned several detailed studies on Argali which have provided useful information on numbers of argali at several locations. However, these studies were not based on an adequate methodology and hence cannot provide suitable data for use as a baseline or in monitoring. 'Monitoring protocols' were provided to rangers and several herder groups concerned with management of the Altai argali. The monitoring forms principally supported the gathering of *ad hoc* information on group sizes and composition.

Mostly, the biodiversity studies and the other studies commissioned by ASP have utilised existing information about the area. With a few minor exceptions (argali and cormorants) the commissioned studies have not undertaken new biodiversity surveys or new research. As a consequence, new studies will be required to determine whether the populations of argali (and the other key species) are growing, stable or declining.

Although the ASP does not have information on trends in Argali, it has been able to confirm a marked decrease in trophy-sized males in at least one location. It used the information to influence a 3-year ban<sup>15</sup> on hunting argali in Deluun Suum, Bayan Olgii. It has also gathered some information from MNE on the number of trophy animals shot.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> The hunting ban was also put in place in Uvs (although not as a result of the Altai Sayan Project). Hunting continues in Khovd and is occurring apparently at an increased frequency due to the presence of Uvs hunters. This emphasises the need for a common policy across *aimags*.

*Medicinal Plants*: The project has not gathered any quantitative information on the abundance or collection of rare plants or plants whose products are used as medicines, herbs or food.

# 4.4.2.2 GIS and Biodiversity Information System

The company, Mongol Nature, was awarded a contract by the project in July 2008 to compile an Altai Sayan database and design a new project website providing access to a GIS through an interactive map-based system. The company has subcontracted the work. The director of Mongol Mature was unable to show a working version of the database when visited by the evaluation team on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008. The database websites <u>www.altaisayan.com</u> and <u>www.altaisayan.mn</u> have subsequently been "down for maintenance" or "under construction" whenever checked from November 2008 through to January 2009. The international advisor reports (Mission Report, 17 October 2008, Annex 8) that (a) the tasks assigned under the contract do not meet the project needs; and (b) the Mongol Nature team is struggling to meet the specifications given to them regarding the interactive maps and the hot links to relational databases on the same and other websites.

The Altai Sayan Project does not have a Biodiversity Information System (BIS), i.e. a system for storing, managing and retrieving information on plants, animals and habitats of conservation importance, and on the uses of and threats to natural resources. The MTE considers that a GIS is not a substitute for a BIS (Biological Information System) which needs to be developed separately. Both need to be developed and ideally the BIS should be linked to the GIS.

*Comment:* The biodiversity studies commissioned by the project are mostly descriptive reports based on summaries of existing information.

*Comment:* The project has not gathered any new population data on such key umbrella species as wild reindeer, brown bear, wolf, wolverine, otter, eagles, vultures or eagle owls.

*Comment:* The wildlife studies and initiatives undertaken by ASP do not constitute monitoring. (An explanation and description of Biological Monitoring is provided in Annex 7 for future reference by ASP.) Consequently an effective monitoring programme has not been implemented.

*Comment:* The project has not developed a Biological Information System to store, analyse and retrieve survey-based biodiversity data. A BIS is needed to support monitoring of natural resources and key species and to allow the management authority to evaluate the outcome of conservation actions. The project has contracted Mongol Nature to develop a GIS with a sophisticated map-based search engine. When developed, the GIS will manage environmental map-based information similar to the GIS currently managed by WWF and NGIC. The MTE is uncertain whether Mongol Nature is capable of developing such a system and doubts whether such a sophisticated search-engine system is suitable for the project's needs which are to support regional landscape planning in *aimags*.

*Key issue:* Lack of baseline information and monitoring. The Altai Sayan project has not yet achieved a satisfactory baseline of information on biodiversity in the Altai and Sayan Eco-Region:

<u>Baseline Surveys and Monitoring</u>. ASP has yet to organise baseline surveys of the principal taxonomic groups (i.e. mammals, birds, reptiles & amphibians, fish, selected invertebrate groups, vascular plants and fungi). It has some information on a few key resource species, notably argali and ibex. This information has not been collated for whole *aimags* or entered into a database. Furthermore, the project appears not to have understood the basis of monitoring of natural resources. The data that it collected, for example on group size of argali, are not sufficient for assessing the status or trends of this resource. Consequently the project has been unable to establish a functional monitoring programme.

<u>Use of Natural Resources</u>. The project has not obtained adequate baseline information on the legal uses of natural resources (e.g. timber, wildlife, fish, herbs and pastures) or on the major threats to biodiversity (illegal hunting, logging, fishing, collecting of rare plants, river pollution etc.).

<u>Socio-Economic Baseline Information.</u> Socio-economic reports were not seen by the evaluation team but apparently exist. The project offices in Bayan Olgii and Khovgol had access to official (*sum* office) data on human population, employment and livestock, etc. It is not clear to what extent it has gathered new data on herder livelihoods, income sources and expenditures which could be used to judge the utility of livelihood improvements. Certainly this information, if it exists, is not being utilised locally.

## 4.4.3 Output 3 Landscape conservation

Output 3 extends the activities of Output 1 by introducing the concept of landscape-based conservation into the planning and implementation system of the four project *aimags*. To this end, the project has established its operations in each of the 4 *aimags* that comprise the Altai and Sayan regions, and is conducting pilot activities in 20 selected *sums* across the region. ASP had made little progress towards establishing a useful system of landscape conservation in the Altai Sayan until recently with the inauguration of a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. Prior to that, the project had been pursuing several, disconnected strategies, including:

- a. assisting with the incorporation of biodiversity considerations into land-use planning by the land management agency at *aimag* and *sum* levels,
- b. supporting the management authority (PAA) of existing PAs,
- c. supporting formation of Herder Groups with an interest in conserving wildlife (and securing hunting fees) in locally managed areas.

The concern of the MTE is that none of these three approaches was adequately suited to the underlying concept of the ASP which is to introduce community-based, collaborative and integrated management of natural resources across the landscape of the Altai Sayan regions. Approach a. is continuing the existing sectoral and top-down planning process, and approach b. is supporting conventional PA mechanisms, both of which the ASP was intended to reform. Approach c. is promoting a Herder Group model which the MTE finds unsuitable for the purpose of the Altai Sayan project. These issues are discussed above under Output 1.

The outline of the Altai Mountains Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (Annex 10 of Mission Report 1 of LPBCA, 17 October 2008) provides a comprehensive framework for biodiversity

conservation planning in the Altai Mountains landscape. It itemises the section headings of a landscape-based conservation plan that will be developed in participation with local stakeholders and presented for official adoption by the *aimag* and *sum* governments of Uvs, Khovd, Bayan Olgii and Govi Altai. A professional team has been assembled with the aim of completing the plan by June 2009. The first workshop took place in Khovd, 8-12 December 2008. A similar plan for the Sayan Basin Landscape will be produced by December 2009. These early outputs in landscape conservation show promise and the plans, if implemented, will play a vital role in ensuring that the biological diversity and ecological processes of the Altai and Sayan Mountains are protected as economic development gathers pace.

*Comment:* Herder Groups should not be expected to undertake landscape planning unless the project delivers a major process-driven programme of herder community planning and development, as recommended in Section 6.1.2 (Revised Outcome 2, Output III).

*Comment:* The project intends to assist the Protected Areas Administration (PAA) with developing PA management plans that integrate wider landscape-based conservation after it completes the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the Altai eco-region. In addition, ASP has provided a few specific inputs under strategy b. which have been successful. These include the supply of coal burning stoves and central heating system to Border Patrols to replace the wood-burning stoves that utilised large amounts of firewood. They also include the supply of PA rangers with motorbikes, binoculars, uniforms, camping gear and other equipment to assist their patrol work.

*Key issue:* <u>Landscape Planning</u>. Land management offices in *sums* need ASP assistance with regional environmental planning and biodiversity management in the following areas:

- Identifying components of biodiversity that require a landscape based (as opposed to a protected area based) approach to conservation (e.g. large, rare and migratory species) and establishing appropriate management/action plans;
- Identifying, monitoring, and managing threats to biodiversity such as fences, new roads, new settlements, sources of river pollution, and high altitude grazing. The project also needs to urgently address the plans for the new Millennium Road connecting China to Russia and crossing Bayan Olgii (Figure 6, Section 1.2.3.3).
- Identifying, monitoring and managing threats to natural resources, such as illegal hunting, overgrazing, over-utilisation of timber, over-cleaning of forests, and over-fishing;
- Use of GIS to assist planning and mainstreaming of biodiversity into policy and development plans.

# 4.4.4 Output 4 Transboundary conservation

The fourth output extends the project landscape approach to neighbouring countries through transboundary conservation. The international context of the Altai Sayan project is illustrated in Figure 9.



Figure 9. The Altai-Sayan eco-region in China, Mongolia and Russia.

In this map (from the Russian Project Newsletter), shaded areas indicate six key territories that have been selected by experts within the Russian portion of the eco-region as priority ones for biodiversity conservation and implementation of the project activities. One of these areas (number 6) borders Khovsgol *aimag* in the north-west, another (number 3) runs along the northern borders of Uvs and Bayan Olgii *aimags*.

The ASP has held a number of useful meetings with Russian counterparts which have led to the signing of agreements on joint management plans. The project has not so far translated these meetings and agreements into tangible transboundary conservation activities such as joint surveys, law enforcement training, anti-poaching patrols, species or habitat conservation actions, or cross border tourism. The MTE also understands that international considerations are an integral part of the current landscape-based planning work being undertaken by the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

WWF Mongolia manages a sister project in the Altai region which has been more active on the international front. Together with protected area staff in Russia, they conducted a census of the Altai argali in Tuva and Altai Republics and in the bordering area of Mongolia (Oct-Nov 2007). WWF has continued to work jointly with Russian partners, most recently in connection with radio telemetry monitoring of collared Argali. Also in 2007 they participated

in a transboundary workshop organised by UNDP for customs staff of Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia on illegal trade in endangered species.

*Comment:* Useful introductory transboundary meetings in Russia but to date there has been little progress on the ground in Output 4.

#### *Comment:* No contacts with China.

*Comment:* Discussion with several *sum* governors suggests that they do not know how to proceed on issues involving the affairs of neighbouring states.

#### Key issue: Development of an ecosystem approach to transboundary conservation

The MTE considers that there are several opportunities for progressing transboundary conservation that the project should investigate. Most of the ASP discussions about transboundary conservation have centred on the development of links and complementary management regimes between neighbouring protected areas (across the Mongolian borders with Russia and China). However, many of the existing PAs are centred on remote areas which require a protection logic that is based on ecosystem conservation. The following three examples illustrate this concept:

#### A. Montane catchments

Where the international border traverses a mountain range, ASP should develop transboundary collaboration based on an integrated catchment management approach. In this way, systematic attention could be paid to the several important catchments and basins in the Altai Sayan eco-region that are shared between Mongolia, China, Russia and Kazakhstan.

## B. Animal migrations and transboundary cooperation.

In some other countries, transboundary conservation has been centred on the protection of migratory animals. One famous example is the wildebeest migration of the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem which crosses between the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania and the contiguous Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya. There are several possible candidates in the Altai-Sayan eco-region:

- a. Wild reindeer reportedly still migrate between the northwest taiga (Khovsgol) and eastern Tuva providing a focal point for transboundary cooperation and conservation.
- b. Red deer were reportedly making seasonal movements across the border between Mongolia and China close to the international border crossing at Dayan Hunshanzi (Sagsai *sum*). The border crossing could provide a focal point for transboundary cooperation but the recently erected Chinese fence along this border threatens the movement of wildlife.
- c. Altai argali share a common range between border areas of Uvs *aimag* and the Republic of Tuva where some progress has been made already in transboundary cooperation.

#### C. Transboundary rivers

Given the major mining developments impending in the region, the Altai Sayan Project should be proactive in setting up transboundary agreements over the protection from pollution of rivers that flow across international boundaries. The Bulgan river that flows through Bayan-Olgii and Khovd aimags into China is just one example of a catchment where the ASP should be following such an approach.

# 4.4.5 Output 5. Livelihoods development

The fifth output is concerned with assisting herder communities to improve their livelihoods on the basis of sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity conservation. The project has supported the formation of some 78 groups<sup>16</sup> and assisted in organising business training for members in a range of fields, including enterprise development, business financing and product marketing. The project has also handed out a variety of grants and equipment to support the establishment of HG businesses.

The MTE was informed of the following types of new enterprises being established with project support:

- craft ware (felt, leather, timber, rope) production and selling
- milk products
- firewood collection and selling
- hay (and other winter food for livestock) growing and selling
- vegetable growing and selling
- sea-buckthorn cultivation for juice production
- plant nursery for cultivation and selling of seedlings
- growing vegetables
- tourism ventures (river rafting, wildlife watching, guided trekking, ger accommodation, horse rental, Tsaatan teepee camp)
- pasture management
- mare farming
- wildlife hunting management.

The range of activities under this component is commendable, comprising some of the Altai Sayan Project's more tangible benefits, but the HG programme overall is let down by lack of a coherent strategy for HG development, organisation and planning. The MTE notes that the extended programme of 78 HGs is well beyond the pilot programme envisaged in the Project Document. Without a guiding strategy, the ASP work has been piecemeal and disjointed with many groups receiving minimal training and support. In some cases HG activities do not even fall within the project's priority areas of intervention. There are also doubts about financial and social sustainability of some HGs, and about their replicability as models for other sites or communities. Project support during 2008 has been especially low, and many herder groups are beginning to feel disillusioned. A substantial number of HGs are no longer active.

These doubts are amply borne out by a commissioned study of the project's work with Herder Groups (COCONET 2008). The report notes that 78 local Herders Groups have been established in the 20 *sums* involved in ASP with some 2,311 herders from 979 herding households collaborating in these Groups. Out of the 78 herders groups, 62 (78%) are unregistered informal groups, 11 (14.1%) are registered as NGOs and 2 of them (2.5%) have formed business cooperatives. Disappointingly, the COCONET evaluators found that most of these herders groups were solely dependent on the external support provided by the project

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> All but 30 of the herder groups were established on their own, and only partner with ASP.

and that they lacked internal organizational capacity, structure and leadership. The evaluators did not meet any herders groups that were engaged in implementing tangible activities for biodiversity conservation.

The COCONET evaluation makes it clear that ASP is in urgent need of expert assistance in community conservation development Output 5 is to be delivered successfully.

The lack of any systematic connection between HG development and natural resource management and/or biodiversity conservation is a further significant problem. In some cases there have even been <u>negative</u> effects on biodiversity, for instance increased markets for milk encouraging grazing in a national park (Altai Tavan Bogd), unplanned river diversions, sea buckthorn in unsuitable sites.

It is evident that the project has suffered from a lack of strategic guidance in developing its HG programme which is a pity as the community work has been pushed enthusiastically by the PIU teams, which apparently worked well together in each of the four *aimags*. Furthermore, a small number of HGs and CBOs visited by the MTE mission were well-motivated and organised, and capable of achieving the results they were seeking.

The project will need to ensure that its Livelihoods Development Support (LDS) is closely integrated with that of other agencies and projects (of which there are several in the project region), so that together they may institute and sustain a consistent and appropriate system, with common principles of providing access to credit, technical advice and assistance, and of promoting and facilitating an increasingly diverse range of socially beneficial and environmentally sustainable livelihoods options. In practise this will mean providing guidance to other projects in livelihoods development so that they are aware of criteria to follow to ensure biodiversity conservation. Clearly the project will first need outside expertise for its own work.

One area of HG development that shows promise is the community management of argali and argali habitat for hunting and/or tourism. The project has achieved some success particularly with respect to facilitating payment to Herder Groups by trophy hunters for ger accommodation and horse rental. The concept of community retention of trophy fees remains problematic (see *Comments* below). However in mountains to the south of Khokh Serkh SPA, the project has worked successfully with the Environmental Inspector to obtain a 3-year ban on argali hunting to assist in the recovery of trophy males.

*Comment:* <u>Herder group monitoring</u>. Herder groups do not yet have the capacity to monitor or manage argali or other trophy animals. The annual monitoring being undertaken does not provide a systematic count of the number and class of animals in the local population.

*Comment:* <u>Trophies and Fee retention - Argali</u>: Apparently 20% of the fee for an argali trophy (\$4,000) goes to the local *sum* budget in the form of a conservation fund but the use of this money is at the discretion of the *sum* governor. There were complaints about the lack of accountability for how these funds are spent. The herder groups who are becoming involved in the management of argali currently do not benefit.

*Comment:* <u>Trophies and Fee retention - Taimen</u>: ASP should address the situation regarding the retention of fees for sport fishing of Taimen. Presently 'catch and release' licences are available from MNE for a trophy fee of US\$120. The return of a portion of this trophy fee by

the Ministry of Finance to the local area for conservation purposes is mandated under law. Apparently 50% of the trophy fee is indeed returned to the local *sum* government from the Ministry of Finance but there are complaints that it is never used in fishery protection.

*Comment:* <u>Management of fisheries</u> is beyond the ability of herder groups. The project should seek to improve the state system of monitoring fish stocks and fish offtake, and with instigating reforms to the current management system.

*Comment:* <u>Revolving loan scheme.</u> One example of questionable ASP action is to give cash grants and/ or equipment (such as solar panels and electicity generators) to the HGs or CBOs with which the project works. This kind of support can work if there are strong reasons for expecting the pilot to be so successful in which case others will want to invest in the same way. It would be preferable, however, for the ASP and other assistance agents to support a revolving loan scheme, perhaps in conjunction with an existing local finance institution.

*Key issue:* <u>Strategy and Policies for Development.</u> Delivery and impact of livelihoods development could be improved if there were clear objectives, a clear strategy and policies for the project to follow, and closer integration of actions under project components 1, 2, 3 and 5.

*Key issue:* <u>Natural Resources Management.</u> Livelihoods development support by the ASP must be closely linked to the planning and management of natural resources (CB NRM) in a local area. HGs require specific support in developing their ability to monitor and manage wildlife resources.

*Key issue:* Ecotourism development. The results of ASP support for the Tsaatan Teepee Camp are promising. The Tsaatan HG has a clear vision for developing ecotourism which is linked to biodiversity conservation through their willingness and capacity to reduce the amount of hunting in the taiga. There is potential for development of ecotourism involving other herder groups. The association formed between ASP and the Community Based Tourism Network in Bayan Olgii has so far been disappointing in terms of visitor numbers. There may be an advantage in dealing with professional tour operators, provided legally binding and fair agreements can be negotiated to avoid the unscrupulous practises of some UB-based companies.

*Key issue:* <u>Law Enforcement</u>. There is an underlying problem of law enforcement in connection with illegal hunting and fishing in Khovsgol. Much illegal fishing and movement of fish allegedly takes place at night in winter and it is widely alleged that the quota system for exploiting fish stocks is being flouted.

*Key issue:* The <u>eco-club programme</u> shows considerable potential. Peace Corps have provided one youth education volunteer who is working to improve the activities of the ecoclubs, with a particular focus on sustainability. In the past, Peace Corps developed a manual on organising educational activities that can be organised without any cost. This is deemed to be very practical and sustainable for the ecoclubs. The volunteer will also lead an assessment of the ecoclubs and develop a plan for the sustainability and future of each individual club.

ASP should provide additional support to the eco-club programme so that it can be expanded. The additional support should include much-needed assistance with teaching in natural history. There is also an opportunity to create joint activities between two or more eco-clubs through the creation of a newsletter.

## 4.4.6 Education and Awareness-Raising

A vital but somewhat hidden component of ASP's work in the Altai Sayan is the education of stakeholders about biodiversity and the project's conservation work. Conservation education is a three-stage process: i) careful and artistic interpretation of biodiversity utilising information gathered from surveys and project work; ii) preparation of educational resources (including CD presentations, videos, posters, booklets and displays), and iii) utilisation of those resources in campaigns and activities designed to raise awareness of biodiversity amongst a wide range of stakeholders (viz. the herder communities, schools and the local population, *aimag, sum* and *bag* officers, the projects own staff, NGOs, other projects, national government officials, collaborators in Universities and Specialist Institutions, national politicians, visitors to the region, and the wider public, see Table 6).

The Altai Sayan Project has two Activities in its logframe that relate to biodiversity education:

Activity 2.3: Conduct training to enable government and local herders and other stakeholders to incorporate basic biodiversity conservation information into their productive sector work.

Activity 5.4: Cultivate the emergence of apex institution for learning among community groups in the Altai-Sayan.

*Comment:* Education Gap in ASP Outputs. Although the ASP has a successful programme for raising environmental awareness in eco-clubs and schools, it does not have a specific Output or Activity for delivering biodiversity education and disseminating information on biodiversity and conservation. The MTE encountered a widespread misunderstanding of the project's primary conservation goal in the Altai Sayan region, and a general lack of awareness of biodiversity and the concept of sustainable resource use. This latter was evident at many levels from herder groups to government departments and even amongst the project's own staff. This can be attributed to the evident gap in education, awareness-raising and information dissemination amongst the project's Outputs and Activities.

# 5 CONCLUSIONS

The project has established good relations with the individual *sum* and *aimag* government offices and NGOs that are active in the Altai and Sayan regions. Nevertheless in its first four years, ASP's programme of support has not met the twin targets of (a) mainstreaming biodiversity into development or (b) establishing a system for ensuring landscape conservation<sup>17</sup> (Outputs 1 & 3). The ASP has opened discussions with neighbouring countries on transboundary conservation but achieved no solid results so far (Output 4). It has also supported 78 herder groups but without a guiding strategy that would have linked the community enterprises with biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources (Output 5). In addition, it has commissioned research on biodiversity and natural resources but has not managed to establish a proper baseline of information by which to monitor conservation progress (Output 2). Despite considerable effort by staff and supervisors, the project's overall performance against its stated objectives is unsatisfactory in the course of its first 4 years (2004-2008).

One factor contributing to weak performance has been two omissions in the project design: i) a specific output for planning and establishing systems to manage biodiversity and natural resources; and ii) a specific output for implementing a biodiversity education and awareness programme (refer to Sections 4.4.3, 4.4.6). The absence of the first has caused problems at every level from the individual herder groups to the need for government policy reforms. The gap in education and awareness is revealed in a widespread misunderstanding of the project's primary goal that was also evident at many levels from herder groups to project head office.

A second factor contributing to weak performance is the logical framework which is not well suited to project management and supervision (Section 4.1.4). A third factor has been the failure to establish the project as a collaborative initiative between several "full partner" organisations, especially with MNE and other mainstream government departments (Section 4.2.1). A fourth factor has been the supervision arrangements which have not provided sufficiently clear direction for the project, and have tended to focus on minor management and administrative decisions.(Section 4.2.3). A fifth factor has been the staff employment conditions combined with the initial location of the project head office in Khovd, and subsequently, with the inadequate office arrangements in Ulaanbaatar. A sixth factor has been the absence of a broad project implementation plan and monitoring framework by which to foster good management (Section 4.2.4). A seventh factor has been the confused and staggered start to the project, and to the fund disbursements by the Dutch Government, UNDP and GEF.

Significant as these seven factors are, they may not be the principal cause of the weak performance of the project up to its mid-term. The MTE considers the principal weakness of ASP to have been the failure to obtain senior staff and consultants (either directly or through partnerships) with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and implement its technical components. Senior staff who could have assisted with policy reforms were not recruited and the opportunity to bring in senior consultants to advise on policy, research and management was not taken. The resulting weakness in capacity applies especially to the following technically demanding areas: (a) biodiversity and other baseline surveys, (b) biodiversity information systems, (c) natural resource management (planning and practise),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The recently initiated Biodiversity Conservation Strategy held its first participatory workshops after the MTE; it promises to develop an excellent landscape-based approach to conservation in the second half of the project.

and (d) integrating livelihood development of herders with conservation. As a result progress has been unsatisfactory and project staff have not benefitted from working alongside a wide variety of experienced senior experts.

The project has three more years to run and over 50% of its budget to spend. It is therefore in a strong position to accept restructuring, redirection and revision for the purpose of lifting constraints on performance and promoting a strong delivery of outputs. Furthermore the project has a committed and talented staff motivated to implement its outputs. It has a good regional network of herder communities and potential partners. It is concluded that the project can still implement a successful project, provided it is prepared to accept significant changes to its institutional arrangements, work programming, and technical inputs.

# **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

# 6.1 **Project Formulation**

## 6.1.1 Revise Main Components of Project

# 6.1.1.1 Strategic focussing of project and objectives

Based on its assessment of the project design, the MTE **recommends** (1a) that ASP reaffirms very clearly the substance of what the Altai Sayan Project is aiming to achieve and, in the process, revises the Outcomes and Outputs to provide a more coherent project strategy in line with that given in Section 6.1.1.2. As part of this review, the MTE recommends that the project objective be retained as is, but that the first five of its six outputs be redefined and reorganised into three substantive outcomes. Each of these three outcomes will have an associated set of 3-5 outputs around which specific project activities will be organised. The substance of Output 6 (monitoring project performance) should be included with the other project management tools (see Section 6.1.3).

The revision should also bring the project logframe into line with GEF guidelines which request a single objective, under which are a number of outcomes and under them a number of outputs. The outcomes should be individual project components which establish the necessary conditions for biodiversity conservation; the outputs should be single results that can be achieved through completion of project activities (UNDP/GEF 2005a). Outputs should be monitored through indicators and milestones.

The three revised Outcomes must work in combination with one-another so that the overall project works towards achieving its Purpose of *establishing a landscape conservation system across Mongolia's Altai and Sayan regions that has the capacity to conserve biodiversity.* The planned set of around 11 Outputs (Section 6.1.1.3) should be crafted carefully as they constitute the crucial middle-level results about which the project's activities will be organised.

The revision of the project logframe should take place immediately after the MTE. It is **recommended (1b)** that this work is accompanied by formulation of an implementation plan for the duration of the project (complete with indicators and milestones) and a budget in line with the changes made. It is **recommended (1c)** that the programme period of the Altai Sayan Project remain as given in the 2006 Project Document (i.e. 2007 - 2011). The desirability of a project extension beyond this date for one further year can be considered, but the case should be made only after real progress with implementing the <u>revised</u> project strategy has been achieved. Suggested guidelines for developing an implementation plan for the project duration are as follows:

- a. Identify project team and lead/thematic expert<sup>18</sup> (or partner<sup>19</sup>) for each of the main project components;
- b. With input from the lead expert, plan the strategy that the project will use to implement each component over the remainder of the project duration; write an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Refer to Section 6.2.1.2 for details about lead and thematic experts

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Partners are not ideal for this crucial function of driving forward the output because they have their own agendas which differ from that of ASP. Any partnership agreed should have a detailed agenda and be closely scrutinised by ASP on a monthly basis.

outline description of who will do what, with whom, where, when and how, in order to achieve the objective.

- c. Communicate these strategies and their subsequent implementation progress to key target stakeholders/ partners so as to maintain their interest and engagement.
- d. Plan joint strategies with stakeholders/ partners pursuing similar objectives.

# 6.1.1.2 Project Strategy

The project strategy (Objective, Outcomes and Outputs, UNDP/GEF 2005a) should form a coherent whole which guides the project to a successful conclusion. The following set of Revised Outcomes and Outputs, in support of an unchanged Project Objective, would provide such a strategy.

## **Revised Outcome 1: Operational biodiversity information system**

The MTE considers that the gaps in information on the major components of biodiversity in the project areas are a major obstacle to biodiversity conservation. Information on the status and utilisation of important natural resources is mostly insufficient to prepare natural resource management plans, likewise information on key elements of biodiversity is often absent or insufficient to formulate effective action plans as part of the landscape-based conservation output, and thirdly the widespread lack of appreciation of biodiversity is hampering acceptance of the project's objective and aims. Accordingly, the revised Outcome 1 should establish a <u>baseline of biodiversity information</u> and a biological <u>monitoring system</u> that can be managed by one of the key stakeholders. It is recommended that this Outcome contain four Outputs:

- I. Baseline assessment of biodiversity;
- II. Baseline assessment of the uses of, and threats to, natural resources;
- III. Monitoring system for natural resources and biodiversity;
- IV. Biodiversity Information System that links to the Altai/Sayan GIS.

## **Revised Outcome 2: Management Systems for Biodiversity and Natural Resources**

The MTE considers it confusing and ineffective to divide conservation work, as in the current project plan, between Outputs 3, 4 and 5, concerned respectively with establishing a landscape conservation approach; transboundary conservation collaboration; and conservation-oriented livelihoods. The combined objective should be to establish a system of integrated management of biodiversity and natural resources, based on local community and government co-management across the Altai Sayan Eco-region. This constitutes the core component of the second phase of ASP. It is recommended that this Outcome contain four Outputs that complement one another to provide a comprehensive system for the management of biodiversity and natural resources:

- I. Developed policy, strategy and plan for the co-management of natural resources;
- II. Developed policy, strategy and plan for landscape conservation of biodiversity;
- III. Successful model for community management of natural resources established;
- IV. Successful model for transboundary conservation cooperation established.

#### **Revised Outcome 3: Education and Awareness Programme**

The MTE encountered a considerable level of misunderstanding of the concepts of biodiversity, natural resources, sustainable utilisation and conservation, and therefore of the project's work in the Altai Sayan eco-region. Outcome 3 meets the need for an <u>education and awareness</u> programme that can raise awareness of biodiversity amongst a wide range of

stakeholders. Such a component was regrettably absent from the Project Document even although it is a necessary constituent of effective biodiversity conservation. Outcome 3 recognises that information and its interpretation have a vital role in raising the appreciation of biodiversity and natural resource management, in explaining the importance of the project's work to stakeholders, and in creating a more favourable environment in which the project can prosper. It is recommended that this Outcome comprise three Outputs:

- I. Interpretation, education and training materials prepared;
- II. Information about project activities disseminated to stakeholders;
- III. Eco-club programme expanded.

# 6.1.2 Details of Revised Outcomes and Outputs

#### **Revised Outcome 1: Operational biodiversity information system**

The purpose of this component is twofold: (a) to establish a baseline of information to assist in the management of biodiversity at the landscape level; and (b) to establish a system for monitoring the health of natural resources and their level of utilisation. This is a highly technical component of the project which will require inputs from a number of national and international short-term experts with precise terms of reference if it is to be successfully implemented. The information obtained should be held on a database that is managed by one of the project stakeholders with headquarters in Ulaanbaatar but available locally online (see below); the monitoring system will employ simple-to-measure but robust indicators that can be implemented by local government stakeholders within the Altai Sayan region as part of their environmental management system.

Many of the conservationists and rangers associated with the project are keen to learn the state-of-the-art survey techniques needed for effective biodiversity assessment. This project should therefore continue to emphasize the heuristic value of the work performed by national and international experts and strive to transfer knowledge and skills to local counterparts at every opportunity.

## Output I. Baseline Assessment of Biodiversity

This component will comprise a series of field-based surveys covering a range of biodiversity. The guiding principal in choosing what to survey will be the need to provide management authorities with information that will assist in conserving vulnerable biodiversity and key natural resources. On the biodiversity front, priority should be given to endemic and threatened species of the Altai and Sayan Mountains and those species requiring protection at the landscape level (i.e. those occurring at low density and/or occupying large ranges). The choice of where to survey will be as important as what to survey. For instance surveys of mammals would be usefully undertaken in the western taiga region of Khovsgol.

As a preliminary guide, the following surveys and studies should be undertaken, accompanied in each case by on-the-job training in survey methodology:

- Mammals
- Birds
- Fish
- Reptiles and amphibians
- Plants and fungi

• Selected invertebrate groups as indicators (e.g. butterflies & certain aquatic insects).

It should be borne in mind that there are three basic levels of biodiversity survey: inventory observations, estimates of relative abundance, and estimates of actual abundance (Annex 8). A combination of inventory surveys and relative abundance techniques will be appropriate in most instances regarding the biodiversity assessment of the Altai-Sayan eco-region. Thus, surveys of birds and mammals should, where possible, utilise relative abundance techniques. However, surveys of argali and ibex should aim for absolute abundance measures. For surveys of cryptic species, such as small mammals, the photographic method utilised in the Wildlife Picture (ZSL/WCS 2008) is recommended.

# Output II. Baseline assessment of the uses of, and threats to, natural resources

This output will comprise: (A) a series of resource-use and threat surveys; (B) a series of conservation studies to provide additional detailed information where required; and (C) socio-economic surveys.

## A. Resource-use and threat surveys

The aim of the resource-use surveys is to assess the overall use – legal and illegal – of important natural resources in the Altai Sayan eco-region. These surveys should cover the following resource uses:

- Hunting
- Fishing
- Timber and NTFPs
- Livestock and Pasture Use
- Mining

Specific examples of resource-use surveys that should be undertaken in the Altai Sayan ecoregion are provided in Annex 9.

## B. Conservation Studies.

The aim of conservation studies in the Altai Sayan eco-region is to provide management with (a) estimates of the level of offtake of natural resources that would be sustainable and (b) safe limits on pollution levels (where they are greater than zero). Additional aims are to provide more detailed information to support species action plans, habitat management plans, and transboundary conservation plans. Conservation studies are needed for wildlife, forestry, fisheries, pastures, and mining activities. Specific examples of conservation studies needed in the Altai Sayan eco-region are provided in Annex 10.

## C. Socio-economic Surveys

Some socio-economic survey work was apparently undertaken by the project but the results of this work were not assessed by the MTE. The kind of socio-economic data that would be of greatest use to the project includes the following:

- family size
- education
- employment
- livestock ownership per household
- seasonal movements of families and their herds
- income sources (e.g. cashmere, horse and cattle pelts, selling horses, cattle, sheep, goats, milk and other products)
- Essential expenditures (e.g. food, clothing, hospital & school expenses, veterinary supplies)
- Supplemental income (e.g. hunting, fishing, wood cutting etc.).

#### Output III. Monitoring system for natural resources and biodiversity

Biodiversity monitoring can only be effective when the purpose of the monitoring is correctly understood. The components of biodiversity that are causing the greatest concern in the region should first be identified. For example, they might include:

- a) decrease in fish stocks,
- b) low population numbers of Argali, Ibex and Altai snowcock,
- c) overuse of forest resources, and
- d) overgrazing of mountain pastures.

Indicators of each biodiversity component threat should then be identified which can be easily measured. For instance an indicator of Argali hunting might be the horn size of trophy males; an indicator of timber cutting might be the proportion of damaged trees along a forest transect. For pasture condition, a simple measure of overgrazing can be obtained by taking 100 'point measures' of grass cover. The point measures can be taken at fixed sites at the edge of a *sum* centre, and 5, 10 & 15 km from the *sum* centre (Murray 1999). Monitoring of the indicator by community members should be considered. Training can follow the model developed in Little Gobi (Jamranjav 2007).

Monitoring of target species and conservation threats should be done by the community group once per year (as a minimum) and should cover, in a short period of time, all geographic areas that the community has an influence over. Note that the current monitoring procedure for communities and rangers taught by ASP is to record observations of wildlife encountered opportunistically in the course of other work or whilst on routine patrols. These observations should <u>not</u> be incorporated into monitoring as they contribute little to the understanding of either the distribution or numbers of the subject of interest.

### Output IV. Biodiversity Information System that links to the Altai/Sayan GIS.

This output is for development of a Biodiversity Information System (BIS) that can support the following tasks:

- entry of baseline assessment and monitoring data;
- simple data analysis;
- data downloads in a number of common formats;
- links to GIS to provide maps of global biodiversity hotspots, species distributions, habitats, threats (new roads and other infrastructure, mine locations, etc.)

It is important that the ASP understand the distinction between a Biological Information System (BIS) and a Geographic Information System (GIS). The project needs both but currently is only developing a GIS. Examples of a BIS can be viewed at:

< http://www.cbif.gc.ca/portal/digir-toc.php > and

< http://patca.zerofive.co.uk/ >.

Both the GIS and the BIS should be mounted on the National Geo-Information Centre server (but a copy could also be kept with WWF). The BIS should be linked to the project GIS so that biodiversity information (such as the distribution of a species or the locations of survey transects) can be accessed against geographic coordinates, wherever possible. The BIS should be accessible via a website so that specialists working in different locations can upload data and download information, including maps, reports, results from analyses, and blank worksheets.

In typical usage, survey specialists hand over information on datasheets to a trained data input specialist who transcribes the data onto Excel worksheets and then uploads them to the database itself. The data in these files will be automatically extracted and entered into the BIS. The website can then be used to review the uploaded survey data, and to carry out simple analyses.

The UNDP/GEF sister project in Russia has initiated development of an Altai-Sayan Biodiversity Database in order to provide information on wildlife in the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion in Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China, including species distributions, population data, conservation status, and other details. At present the database contains information on 4000 animal and plant species inhabiting the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion. The database is essentially a catalogue of species in the eco-region with notes on ecology, status, distribution and natural history. A few species descriptions also include a photograph or illustration. Hence, it is not a fully specified BIS but is nevertheless useful. This database is available online <www.bioaltai-sayan.ru> making it accessible to researchers, national and non-government environmental agencies, businesses, and other stakeholders focused on conservation and sustainable use of the regional species. It would be desirable to link the project's BIS to this database.

To ensure sustainability of the BIS and project GIS, ASP should begin to work closely with NGIC who will eventually manage the system.

### **Revised Outcome 2: Management Systems for Biodiversity and Natural Resources**

As the *Report on the State of the Environment of Mongolia 2006-2007* laments, there is "an increasing trend of air pollution in urban settlements, intense desertification, inadequate land recovery after mining exploitation activities, illegal logging, lack of water resource, negative impacts on human life and environment due to improper use of poisonous and hazardous chemicals, illegal use of biodiversity, natural disasters and wild fires". The report continues: "Therefore, it is important to shape government policies toward enforcing laws and regulations at grassroots level and to adopt clear planning with tight monitoring to minimize negative effects while taking into account the ecological vulnerability of Mongolian nature and environment".

Outcome 2 of the recommended programme of work for the second phase of the Altai Sayan project aims to contribute directly to the above mandate. It contains guidance for establishing management systems, policies and plans for protecting biodiversity and natural resources. Outcome 2 contains four outputs. The first and second concern the policies and strategies for managing natural resources and conserving biodiversity in the Altai-Sayan ecoregion, the third develops a system of community management of natural resources, and the fourth establishes transboundary conservation. These outputs will constitute the main legacy of the revised project.

The proposed means of achieving this outcome are to assist the relevant stakeholders to devise, pilot and subsequently develop, extend and maintain appropriate and effective mechanisms for community-based and collaborative management of natural resources, in an integrated manner across 'sectors' – pasture/ agriculture, forestry, wildlife, land, water, environment, wildlife.

*Output I. Developed policy, strategy and plan for the co-management of natural resources* Assist each *aimag* to prepare a Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP). These plans, which will be incorporated within the more general framework of the Landscape Plan, should include the following:

- a. Current status and trends in natural resources within the aimag;
- b. Current status and trends in uses and threats to natural resources;
- c. Strategy for sustainable management of natural resources;
- d. 5-year management plan for natural resources;
- e. A work plan for the first year's implementation of the NRMP.

The NRMP should in addition make clear which stakeholders (herder groups, *sum* or *aimag* offices, PAA, state government institutes, universities or NGOs) are responsible for implementing each activity, how they will work together, and what resources they require.

By way of illustration, consider the problematic case of overfishing in the Darkhad Valley. Former employees of the fish factory on Tsaagan Nuur now need to fish for their livelihoods. They cannot be expected to give up fishing unless a viable alternative is available. At the same time it is common knowledge that the quota system administered by *sum* governors is abused and that fishermen and fishing enterprises are exceeding the quota. They are aided, it is said, by powerful businesses in Ulaanbaatar although facts are hard to come by. What is not currently known by the project is whether the quota is correctly estimated (i.e. whether it is set at the maximum rate that is sustainable over the long-term and which does not impact negatively on the ecology of lakes and rivers). Nor is it known by how much the quota is exceeded. What we can be certain about is that overfishing is neither in the interests of the local fishermen or the country as a whole.

Tinkering with the livelihoods of local fishing groups by helping them with a vegetable garden (as the project has attempted) will not solve this problem. The project's first job is to obtain accurate information on current fish stocks and annual offtakes (refer to Outcome 1). Then it needs to devise and prepare a feasible management plan for the fishery whilst advising the people of Darkhad Valley on what is a sustainable offtake of fish (Outcome 2). Finally the project needs to lobby government for the introduction of a well-regulated and transparent fishery management system as laid out in the management plan (refer to Outcome 3).

As mentioned under Outcome 1, the project should select just one or a small number of related fish species as a pilot or model for a sustainable fishery system. Similarly they should select pilots from other key resources (wildlife, forests, etc.).

Law enforcement procedures in the *aimags* require close scrutiny. An integrated law enforcement system utilising a single security communications network to link rangers, police, army, government officers and major stakeholders would greatly improve the effectiveness of conservation at the regional level. Once the project has established the level

of illegal offtake, it should develop a law enforcement plan in participation with *sum* and *aimag* governors and security officers, and provide assistance in its implementation.

Output II. Developed policy, strategy and plan for landscape conservation of biodiversity

The landscape-based approach to conservation lies at the heart of the Altai-Sayan Project. It recognises that some species, particularly rare, specialised and migratory species, and also some predators and scavengers, require conservation plans that cover entire landscapes, whilst many threats to conservation such as pollution, commercial hunting and climate change cannot be managed only though protected areas. The project is currently developing a landscape conservation plan (the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy). As intended, the strategy should be completed and implemented in each *aimag*.

The following should be incorporated:

<u>GIS</u>: A training input for the *aimag* land offices in the use of the project's GIS as part of the biodiversity mainstreaming. Given the apparent lack of a needs assessment at the start of GIS development, this training should be undertaken at one *aimag* initially so that the GIS can be modified as necessary to meet local needs.

<u>Mining Licenses</u>: The evaluation team received complaints about some irregularity or inefficiency in the process by which *aimags* are consulted prior to the issuing of mining licenses. There was also reluctance on the part of some *sum* governors to fully share information about mining licenses with the project. The project should establish direct links with the Mineral Resources and Petroleum Authority of Mongolia in updating its GIS with information on licenses, and investigate the *aimag* consultation procedure.

<u>Species Action Plans</u>: Beginning with the Summary Conservation Action Plans (Mongolian Red List documents), the project should select endangered or threatened species of the Altai and Sayan Mountains requiring conservation at the landscape scale to develop detailed species conservation action plans.

<u>Sustainability and trophy fees</u>: Regarding sustainability of the landscape conservation activities, the project should work with the *aimag* govenors and *sum* governors to review how funds obtained from trophy fees and/or licenses can be allocated for environmental and livelihood benefits. This would include funds emanating from MNE for spending on environmental work such as 'biotechnical activities'.

**Output III.** Successful model for community management of natural resources established In implementing Output III, the project should return to the original Project Document concept of developing a small number of herder group enterprises as pilots for others to follow. ASP should be working with communities on a more individualistic basis, choosing a limited number of groups (or areas, as given in the Project Document) and working closely with them to assess problems and opportunities. The emphasis should be to assist herders to develop initiatives themselves. In doing this, ASP should not abandon the groups that it has been working with in the first half term. It should instead develop a set of criteria, or benchmarks, by which to select herder groups that are ready for more advanced stages of training (and financial support when clearly worthwhile). In this way the herder groups can develop at their own pace and the project will be able to train some groups to a high level which can then serve as examples for others. Actions that should be considered in the revised community development strategy include the following:

- a. Joint LDS programming with other agencies and programmes active in Altai Sayan regions.
- b. Livelihoods "options assessments" linked to local (*bag* and *sum*) communitybased NRM planning.
- c. Analysis of environmental sustainability and social costs & benefits built into each livelihoods enterprise initiative.
- d. Technical resources for livelihoods developments linked to the "information centres" developed at *bag* and *sum* centres.
- e. Revolving loans scheme instituted at *sum* and *aimag* levels.

In seeking to develop a model for community management of natural resources, comanagement systems should be explored in recognition of the fact that there is no absolute ownership or right of exploitation to land and natural resources, and that such rights if they existed would pose their own problems for those without territory. The work undertaken in communities living around the little Gobi by NZNI provides a good starting model for this work. The project will be assisting particularly with opportunities based on using natural resources, and with their environmental sustainability and compatibility with the community-based NRM system.

The motivation of herders to accept recommended changes in their lifestyles (i.e. to bring about sustainability in their use of pastures, forest products, fish and wildlife) will depend critically on the project's success in improving their livelihoods. Accordingly, various alternative marketing and value-added options for their products should be investigated. For instance, some herder groups face high transport costs in getting products to market. It is seldom worthwhile for buyers of cashmere or other products to travel from the *aimag* centre to single herders. The project may be able to assist with arranging for joint marketing of products at a scale that would be viable. Again, such assistance needs to be part of an overall plan for improving the management of natural resources.

ASP should investigate the possibility of developing a tourism circuit in Bayan Olgii linking a number of herder groups and creating a unique cultural and wildlife attraction. This would need to be implemented with an experienced partner that is prepared to support the initiative, such as an international tour operator (as requested in Bayan Olgii).

### Output IV. Successful model for transboundary conservation cooperation established

As an important interim step, while the ASP is developing its strategy towards transboundary conservation, it is recommended that a simple routine exchange of project information should be organised as soon as possible between the various conservation and development programmes and projects that are active in the different countries in the transboundary region. These exchanges should be government to government (assisted by projects) so as to build the official transboundary information exchange mechanism.

The transboundary strategy itself should identify possible areas for protection based on the transfrontier ecosystem approach (see Section 4.4.4). The next step would be to prepare joint monitoring and management plans for species that require transboundary protection. Joint (i.e. bilateral) management plans for natural resources such as rivers, lakes, forests and wildlife should also be prepared.

ASP should also seek to initiate joint actions on the ground, at an early stage. This could include training in conservation and law enforcement for border patrols.

Given the interest and experience of WWF Mongolia in transboundary cooperation in the Altai-Sayan region, there may be scope for collaborative work which should be organised and arranged on a case by case basis.

#### **Revised Outcome 3: Education and Awareness Programme**

A key task of the ASP is to imbue a higher appreciation of the Altai Sayan eco-region and of the conservation and development work being undertaken there. Good interpretation is educational: it raises the level of understanding about biodiversity and natural resources which is the best guarantee of their long-term future. Consequently, the third outcome of the project in its second term is to interpret the biodiversity of the Altai Sayan and the conservation work of ASP, and disseminate this information targeting a number of different stakeholders (schools, herder groups, government officers, professional groups and the wider public).

#### Output I. Interpretation, education and training materials prepared

ASP should prepare and print accurate and imaginative interpretation materials to illustrate and describe the biodiversity of the Altai and Sayan Mountains and the utilisation of natural resources in Mongolia. The materials should be aimed at different specific groups – school materials for eco-clubs, PowerPoint presentations for government officers and professionals, project website materials and media releases for the general public. Press releases about the project should contain information about particular demonstration sites or features of biodiversity.

#### Output II. Information about project activities disseminated to stakeholders

<u>Project Staff</u>: The MTE observed that the aims and scope of the ASP were not well understood by many of the project's 46 staff. In the course of the next year, it is recommended that <u>all</u> staff participate in a series of training workshops (which should be small in size) to learn about the project's planned programme of work over its second half term. The training should include a session on biodiversity and on the critical importance of evidence-based conservation and adaptive management. In addition it is recommended that a set of brochures be prepared for distribution by project staff: one brochure should explain the projects objectives and interpret the three Revised Outcomes and associated Outputs; the four others should illustrate the work being undertaken in each *aimag*.

<u>Government offices</u>: Illustrative PowerPoint slides on specific management issues that may require policy reforms or special assistance should be prepared to assist project staff in making effective presentations.

<u>Herder Groups</u>: For herder groups, prepare a handout that provides a summary of how to organize and manage a citizens' community partnership, the regulations governing its formation and activities, and examples of successful community groups. Useful guidance can be found in Asia Foundation (2008). Priority should be given to enabling the herder community to acquire, access and use information so that community members themselves can be the central participants in informed decision-making about the future use and conservation of the natural resources in their areas. In addition, rather than acquiring a wide

range of general information, it will be more effective to focus on gathering specific information that is needed to address the priority natural resource management issues that are the central concerns of the project and its partners.

<u>Wider Public</u>: Disseminate the project locally and nationally at all levels utilising the interpretation materials (brochures, press releases, web pages) to brief newspapers, television, government offices, conferences, visitor centres, etc. The purpose of this campaign is to promote an understanding of the project, and therefore to create a favourable environment, for the reforms necessary to conserve biodiversity and to sustain natural resources.

## Output III. Eco-club programme expanded

ASP has had noted success in developing a number of eco-clubs and is benefitting from the help of a Peace Corps volunteer. This success should be built upon in a number of ways:

- Provide teaching in nature watching/observing and in natural history (which is often lacking in eco-clubs). As part of this activity include field visits to wildlife areas.
- Organises and publish a newsletter for all Altai-Sayan eco-clubs with each eco-club contributing stories and articles, and taking part in competitions;
- Link eco-clubs through joint activities, teaching courses and summer camps.

Specific assistance will be required in the form of (a) an eco-club coordinator and assistants to teach natural history; (b) laptop computers<sup>20</sup> for each eco-club (with an allowance for fuel to run generators where there is no mains electricity), publishing software and training in its use; (c) a supply of information materials (handouts, field guides, books); and (d) a supply of binoculars, plant presses and simple natural history equipment.

ASP should initiate contacts with Mongolian theatrical groups to explore the possibility of creating a production of songs and dances that illustrates the beauty of nature and the problems of overuse and ecological damage. Alternatively ASP could cultivate a caring approach to nature and biodiversity in school children by assisting eco-clubs to put on their own theatrical and dance performances. Such approaches have recently been adopted with great success by conservation projects in African and Europe. For example, see the note on conservation performances in Saiga Conservation Alliance (2008).

The important point is to present nature within the artistic Mongolian tradition so as to evoke the wonder and value of wildlife, and the threats to its future, in the imagination of children and adults. We believe that the rich Mongolian tradition of music, song and dance will provide an excellent medium for this interpretation<sup>21</sup>. Project staff can be made aware of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> The motivation and interest that a participatory newsletter/magazine can generate is enormous with children publishing their own stories, poems, paintings, opinions and experiences and enjoying competitions and joint nature trips. Rural schools in the poorest of African countries can and do use computers for eco-activities and networking (for example: <u>http://www.africanconservation.org/content/view/1241/405/</u>) demonstrating how the provision of one laptop per eco-club, to enable children to participate in the publication of an eco-club newsletter, is very much what conservation is about. The current cost of a powerful laptop is around \$500. Divided amongst 20 or so families over a 5-year replacement period and the cost of its replacement is sustainable - more so, probably, than the radios, motorcycles and uniforms supplied to park rangers, or the coalburning stoves supplied to a border guard units. Some inputs don't need to be sustainable, they exist to spark creativity, fire up initiative and get momentum going.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> A related suggestion would be to establish sporting teams (soccer, basketball, volleyball) where each club has a mascot of a different key species and as part of supporting their play, the project also teaches the kids to learn about their animal. This has been tried successfully in Laos.

recent advances in conservation education, through theatre and local film production, which are proving successful across Africa, the Americas, Europe and more recently in Asia. Examples are the "Theatre for Africa" and its protégés (http://www.seka-educational-theatre.com/why\_theatre.htm); the work of the Education Division of WCS (http://bronxzoo.com/educators.aspx); and the local film making taught in Congo by the International Conservation and Education Fund, INCEF (http://www.incef.org/features/tayna3.html).

On this mission, the MTE attended a song and dance show in Ulaan Uul *sum* centre where the children were excited and enchanted by the performances. It would have been an excellent opportunity to incorporate an environmental message and obtain feedback from the local community. Theatrical and musical events with local culture are very popular in rural Mongolia. Even if the project cannot support a dance group that is completely dedicated to bringing an environmental message, it could work with existing events and provide incentives for traditional entertainers to include conservation in their routine. An environmental dance group would surely offer better results than the bi-weekly discos being supported by the project in one community centre without any environmental theme.

### 6.1.3 Replication Approach

The overall rationale of the project in the second phase will be to develop and test intervention models for each output through a partnership approach involving communities, local government and non-governmental stakeholders. When a satisfactory intervention model has evolved, the project should encourage take-up by government and its replication in other areas of the country and in other projects. Thus the key tasks are to pilot and then demonstrate an innovative management system. The proposed means of achieving this outcome are to assist the relevant stakeholders to devise, pilot and subsequently develop, extend and maintain appropriate and effective mechanisms for community-based and collaborative management of natural resources, in an integrated manner across 'sectors' – pasture/ agriculture, forestry, wildlife, land, water, environment, wildlife.

## 6.1.4 Logical Framework

### 6.1.4.1 Revise Logical Framework

A priority **recommendation** (2) of the MTE is for the senior project management staff (using resource persons and consulting with project staff and partners as necessary) to revise the logical framework, get it approved as the central guiding plan for the remainder of the project, and then to re-form the main project management tools based on the revised LF. The revision should bring the project logical framework into line with GEF guidelines (UNDP/GEF 2005a,b). The main steps suggested for revising the LF are outlined in Table 12. More detailed notes on Outcomes and Outputs and UNDP/GEF guidelines are provided in Section 6.1.1.

Logical Framework revision				
OBJECTIVE	a.	Confirm a clear, succinct, singular objective which is the essential guiding reason for doing the Altai Sayan Project		
OUTCOMES	b.	With the original Objective, "Immediate Objectives" and Outputs as the starting point, carefully think about and define the set of 3- 4 Outcomes that together will form the whole ASP. Section 6.1.1 provides a worked example for guidance.		
OUTPUTS	c.	Plan the small set of 2-4 Outputs that will be achieved under each Outcome. These planned Outputs, perhaps 10-15 in total, are the crucial middle-level results that will be produced by specific sets of project activities.		
	d.	If useful, specify one or more tangible Targets for each output, and by when the project plans to reach the Target.		
RISKS/ ASSUMPTIONS	e.	Review and revise as necessary the Risks/ Assumptions associated with each planned outcome/output.		
INDICATORS	f.	With the current LF indicators as a starting point, specify 1-3 simple Indicators for each Component and Output.		
Means of Measurement (MoM)	g.	Specify a MoM for each indicator – how the project will obtain data on the indicator to monitor progress towards the desired result.		

Table 12. Summary of recommended actions to revise the Project Logical Framework

## 6.1.4.2 Revise Monitoring and Evaluation

The project's M&E program should be re-planned and based on a more systematic and pragmatic approach. The steps to be taken are as recommended for re-development of the logical framework: i.e. confirm the main logical hierarchy of objectives, especially the critical middle-level Outputs; devise 2-3 SMART indicators for each Outcome and Output; base the project's monitoring – information – reporting – evaluation system firmly on these indicators.

# 6.2 **Project Implementation**

## 6.2.1 Strategy for Implementing Revised Project

## 6.2.1.1 Immediate Steps

Once a coherent, clear and consistent set of planned Outputs have been formulated and agreed, the next step will be to carefully plan the project, organise management and administration, and begin to monitor the achievement of results, based on the set of Outputs. ASP should as a priority prepare an overall work plan for the remaining project duration (3 years) to guide implementation during the second term.

## 6.2.1.2 Output Teams and Lead Experts

Responsibility for specific Outputs should be allocated to individual project team members or sub-teams. As stressed in the Conclusions (Section 5), the MTE considers it crucial that the project recruit a number of senior short-term experts with the right technical understanding to advise and drive forward the implementation of these key project outputs and activities. Output teams should formulate and execute a small action plan for each Output.

It is recommended that a series of tools for project management are developed, based on the revised logical framework (Table 13).

Table 13. Recommended actions to develop the main tools for project manage	gement
(based on the revised LF)	

Project Outputs Budget Plan and Expenditure Record			
Prepare summary budget plan for each Output each Quarter, for the remainder of the project life.			
Monitor and record expenditure under each Output each Quarter. Adjust Budget Plan as required at the end of each year.			
Rolling Annual Plan – Project Implementation and Budget			
Using the Project Outputs Budget Plan (1.), prepare a Project Implementation and Budget Plan for the year ahead.			
For each Quarter in the year ahead, specify the <u>main</u> Actions planned under each Output, and their estimated costs.			
Specify the location(s) and lead staff/expert for each main Action.			
System for Project Monitoring, Information, Reporting, Evaluation (M.I.R.E.)			
Organise systematic data-collection (primarily by staff/experts) and a simple information management system to record information on the status of each of the logical framework objectives, Indicators, MoMs, and Risks over the life of the project. Retrieve information from the record system as required, to compile routine and special			
reports, communications, reviews, analyses and evaluations.			
Progress Reports – Technical and Financial			
Senior/ lead staff should prepare a succinct report on substantive progress and expenditure under each Component (and Output if justified) before the end of each Quarter, structured on the annual Project Implementation and Budget Plan (2.).			
Reports should focus on results, issues and lessons rather than activities. Need for policy reforms should be fully justified.			
NPM should compile a succinct Project Progress Report each Quarter, based on the 3-5 Component Reports, summarising substantive progress and expenditure against the LF Outputs and Budget Plan.			

The individual project team members or sub-teams allocated to each Output will be supported by a <u>lead expert</u> with responsibility for driving the Output forward and initiating policy reform where necessary. The lead expert will be supported by one or more <u>thematic experts</u>, if necessary, who will be in charge of specific activities within the Output. The project should take great care in its choice of lead and thematic experts. Experience in the general subject matter is not sufficient for either position. Lead and thematic experts should have a proven and outstanding track record in the effective use of the particular techniques required to deliver the necessary project outputs. In order to focus the project onto its main objectives, each lead expert will assist in setting out criteria that ensure that the desired Output can be achieved accurately and efficiently (e.g. benchmarks for developing herder groups, or criteria that govern the choice of biodiversity surveys).

**MTE Recommendation 3.** Appoint the following senior experts on a part-time basis with recurrent inputs as necessary:

Experts for Revised Outcomes 1 & 2 *Lead expert*: International Technical Adviser<sup>22</sup> (both Outcomes 1 & 2).

## *Thematic expert 1* (biodiversity, hunting and wildlife surveys):

The principal task of this expert is to organise and supervise surveys (under Outputs I & II of the Revised Outcome 1), to assist with devising a monitoring system (Output III of Revised Outcome 1), and to liaise with the Biological Information Specialist (BIS) (Revised Outcome 1). This expert will also be expected to advise on and take responsibility for the development of policy, strategy and planning for the conservation of key species, including the preparation of species action plans, and the management of key wildlife resources (Revised Outcome 2).

Postgraduate and graduate degrees in biological sciences. 10 years experience in fieldbased species surveys and quantitative survey methodology including relative abundance techniques, distance sampling and use of indirect signs. Indicative time: 3-4 months per year.

## *Thematic expert 2* (fisheries):

The principal task of this expert is to undertake a baseline assessment of one or more commercially important fish species (Output II of Revised Outcome 1), to assist with devising a monitoring system (Output III of Revised Outcome 1) and to liaise with the BIS specialist. This expert will also be expected to advise on and take responsibility for the development of policy, strategy and planning for sustainable management of the fishery (Revised Outcome 2).

Bachelor degree or equivalent in biological sciences and 10 years experience in fieldbased fishery and fish surveys and in quantitative survey methodology including both sustainable yields in commercial fisheries and conservation management of freshwater fish.

### *Thematic expert 3* (biological information management systems):

Bachelor degree or equivalent in biological sciences, and a minimum of 7 years experience in biodiversity database management at international level. Areas of expertise should include: biological information management systems, database development and GIS.

### *Thematic expert 4*: (herder community planning and development)

The expert should have extensive experience of developing herder groups in Mongolia according to the approach described in Section 6.1.2 under Revised Outcome 2, Output III. This expert will also be expected to advise on and take responsibility for the development of policy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> It is recommended that ASP appoint the existing Landscape Planning and Biodiversity Conservation Adviser as the International Technical Adviser along the lines of his current part time contract. His duties would be expanded to incorporate both landscape planning and giving technical advice across the full range of project activities. In particular the ITA would be expected to work closely with the Project Manager on all strategic, planning and implementation issues. This expansion in his ToR can be accommodated by supporting the ITA with interpreters, assistants and thematic experts.

### *Thematic expert 5*: (transboundary conservation)

The expert should have extensive experience of working effectively with border guards and military officials at a senior level, and law enforcement agencies. It will be an advantage if the expert has experience of institutionalising law enforcement training and conservation training into military training programmes. The expert should also have a track record in facilitating joint national programmes and will be expected to take responsibility for the development of policy.

### *Thematic expert* 6: (environmental impacts of mining)

The expert should have extensive experience of assessing, monitoring, and mitigating pollution impacts from mining, including gold mining.

#### Additional experts:

On the advice of the lead expert and NPM, additional senior experts may be recruited to assist in biodiversity surveys and/or development of natural resource management plans. Specialists in forest conservation, pasture measurement and wildlife hunting may also be engaged to undertake specific surveys.

The results of all surveys should be included in the expert's reports. Experts should collaborate with the project in entering information into the project BIS and GIS.

#### Expert for Revised Outcome 3

#### *Lead expert* (education & awareness raising)

The specialist should have experience in education and awareness programmes in biodiversity and conservation projects, NGOs or government departments. Art portfolio should demonstrate talent for illustration. Experience of working and organising children's educational activities.

### *Thematic expert 6*: (graphics, web design and media campaigns)

Responsible for eco-club newsletter project, interface with project website and media campaigns.

### 6.2.1.3 Stakeholder Participation

The overall rationale of the project in its second half term will be to develop and test intervention models for each output through a partnership approach involving communities, local government and non-governmental stakeholders. When a satisfactory intervention model has evolved (and this will require imaginative piloting and encouragement of new approaches that gain public involvement) the project can promote its take-up by government and its replication in other areas of the country and in other projects. MTE **recommendation** (4) is for the project management to make the identified stakeholders the central participants in each of the project components, and to plan and organise project activities so that they are implemented primarily by the participants, with facilitation, empowerment and assistance from the ASP. In order to be in the strongest position to empower stakeholders, ASP should take advantage of high calibre experts and experienced volunteers that it can bring into the team to help with technically demanding subjects, such as biodiversity and natural resources management. Selected stakeholders must also share the project vision with ASP and agree to plan under that vision so that the handover of project activities can occur within the scope of the project's objectives.

### 6.2.2 Implementation Arrangements

As noted in Section 4.2.1, the various departments within MNE need to engage more directly with, and make more use of, the Altai Sayan Project. Accordingly, **MTE recommendation** (5) is for the Ministry of Nature & Environment to revise its relationship with the Altai Sayan Project in order to facilitate substantive interactions between the ASP, MNE, MFAg and GoM. Interactions should include MNE organising for GoM policy staff (in government policy and planning units) to work proactively with the Altai Sayan project, to deliver the required institutional and policy reforms in support of the shared objective of sustaining and replicating a landscape-scale, integrated, community-based conservation system.

#### 6.2.3 Partnerships and Collaborative Programming for Conservation

**MTE recommendation** (6) is for the Altai Sayan project management, with the assistance of MNE and UNDP Mongolia, to liaise systematically with the large number of relevant agencies and projects active in the Altai Sayan region, and prepare jointly with them a common Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the region's conservation and sustainable development. This SAP should form part of, and fall within, ASP's recently initiated Biodiversity Conservation Strategy. The common SAP does not need to be an elaborate or lengthy document, but should provide an overarching framework to which each agency can commit itself, and within which individual projects and joint actions can be organised. The wide range of activities (on institutional development, research, information management, policy reform, legislation, education, training, livelihoods, natural resource management, etc.) will be able to be planned by each project and agency with respect to one another. Common tools can be used for M&E and a continuing process of joint planning and development of the SAP can be supported by all parties. Development of an overarching planning and management framework will enable the activities undertaken by the Altai Sayan Project (and other projects) to be more focused, efficient and effective.

### 6.2.4 Project Supervision

**MTE Recommendation** (7) is to streamline and strengthen the arrangements for project supervision, direction and leadership, in three main ways:

- d. Project supervision, direction and policy-setting responsibilities should revert to the small, formal **TPR** (MNE, UNDP, MFE) which should be convened once or twice annually, and its decisions and recommendations conveyed to the PSC and project management. The position of National Project Manager (**NPM**) should be empowered to drive all aspects of project management, in accordance with the Project Document, his ToR, and TPR-approved annual project plans and budgets. Supervision of the project operations and staff, and day-to-day administration responsibilities should be delegated formally to the NPM, who should report to the NPD and TPR.
- e. The **NPD** and PSC Chair (who has numerous other responsibilities) should be enabled to fulfil his second, pivotal function outlined above more pro-actively (i.e. policy and institutional linkage between ASP, MNE and GoM), by working primarily as the principal strategist with the PSC, guiding the integrity of the project in line with the revised project plan and logical framework. The NPD should delegate all day-to-day management and administration to the NPM.
- f. The **PSC** (whose members are busy people) should be asked to concentrate more fully on its primary, "outwards" set of responsibilities outlined above, to focus the PSC

agenda on the key strategic, policy and programme issues concerning conservation, NRM and sustainable development. The PSC should <u>not</u> be involved in project supervision, work plan and budget approval, staffing, administrative matters, etc. The PSC should meet for these purposes <u>without</u> the ceremony of the whole project staff presenting results.

**MTE Recommendation (8)** is to strengthen the Project Steering Committee so that it can more effectively carry out its original mandate. The following specific recommendations apply:

- Appoint the ITA<sup>23</sup> and the UNDP Programme Officer for Biodiversity Conservation as full members<sup>24</sup> of the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The newly appointed representative of the Dutch Government in Mongolia may also be invited.
- Invite the Ministry of Mining and Energy to the PSC;
- Encourage attendance by the Ministry of Agriculture to the PSC;
- Increase the frequency of meetings of the PSC from semi-annually to quarterly<sup>25</sup>;
- Appoint a secretary to the PSC with the following duties:
  - Ensure that all PSC members receive an advance notification of the next meeting and the agenda with items for discussion.
  - Liaise with PSC members prior to meetings over any specific concerns on the agenda that may slow down the meeting unduly.
  - Make minutes of the PSC meeting and circulate to all members.
  - Follow up all resolutions and comments made by the PSC, making sure all necessary actions are taken.

### 6.2.5 Project Staff

### 6.2.5.1 Review Staff Complement

Whilst revising the project's Outcomes and Outputs (see recommendation 1a) and formulating the implementation plan for the project duration (see recommendation 1b), the **MTE recommends (9.1)** that the project staff complement and position descriptions be reviewed by the NPM. The composition of the project team should be revised to ensure that the planned Output teams are led by staff with a sound understanding of the project as a whole and of the Output in particular, and that the Revised Outcomes can be realised. Consideration should be given to the following suggestions from the MTE:

a. Delegate increased authority to the NPM, and strengthen a project senior executive group comprising the NPM, the ITA and the 4 PIU Coordinators with greater direct responsibilities for policy development, project strategy, supervision and management.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> As noted under Recommendation (3), the existing Landscape Planning and Biodiversity Conservation Adviser should be re-appointed as the International Technical Adviser along the lines of his current part-time contract.
<sup>24</sup> This appointment is in addition to the UNDP representative currently serving on the committee

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> The ASP is of major importance to the development of government and sustainable land management and therefore we do not see that it would be a distraction for aimag governors to attend quarterly meetings. However if this is a problem, then the composition of the steering committee should be changed or a smaller working group formed. It is important that the smaller team is fully able to undertake the PSC's main mandate, i.e. to facilitate the implementation of project activities and provide guidance on its key, strategic, policy and programme issues concerning biodiversity conservation, natural resource management and sustainable development.

- b. Reappoint the Landscape Planning and Biodiversity Conservation Adviser as the International Technical Adviser (ITA) to reflect his expanded duties (refer to Recommendation 3);
- c. Strengthen the project team in the area of natural resource management planning and action (community-based, collaborative and integrated/ inter-sectoral), to deliver Revised Outcome 2 more effectively. At this stage in the project, this would be best done by requesting the CEDOs to work on specific tasks in support of the Landscape Strategy which will contain the NRM component. The range of activities and capacities of the 4 *aimag* CEDOs and the 20 Social Mobilizers should be extended. Rather than working individually in isolation, these 24 staff should also form subteams to work together more intensely and introduce community-based NRM sequentially in selected *sums*.
- d. Re-define the role of the M&E officer to strengthen and integrate all aspects of the project's management of Information, Research, M&E, and Communications.
- e. The positions of Research Officer and UNV for research <u>should be filled</u> in support of the expanded programme of work for Revised Outcome 1. The project is in great need of solid research by qualified scientists which it could promote though University collaborations. Equally it should be working closely with students and volunteers (UNV, VSO & Peace Corps). The scientists and skilled volunteers can provide invaluable training to local community groups, especially on monitoring natural resources and integrating biodiversity with development. It is in these ways that the research will have a sustainable impact.
- f. The roles and technical capacities of the main full-time project staff, especially the NPM, PIU Coordinators, CEDOs and M&E officer, should be strengthened with the assistance of the ITA and short-term experts, as required.

## 6.2.5.2 Human resource management

A number of issues concerning staff employment conditions were noted in Section 4.2.4.3 and these should be kept under close review by MNE and UNDP so that rates of pay and DSA rates are competitive. One specific suggestion is to introduce a grading system to some job positions (such as the SMs), which are already filled by individuals on a standard low base salary. Higher performance could be rewarded by a move up to a higher grade in the same position. In order to implement the 'Revised Outcomes' and Outputs described in Section 6.1.1.2, ASP needs to attract quality consultants to assist with policy reform and technical inputs who currently don't apply because of the low rates of pay. MTE **Recommendation** (9.2) is for careful review of (a) staff employment conditions and (b) the rates of pay on offer for new short term contract workers (by a 3-person team from the ASP, MNE and UNDP, tasked to report back to the TPR within 2 months) with costed proposals to address all outstanding issues. MNE and UNDP are urged to take a flexible approach to implementing the proposals and putting in place a package of conditions (pay, DSA, insurance, workplace standards, roles and responsibilities) that will attract high calibre consultants and motivate existing good quality staff.

There has been a variety of on-the-job training provided to staff members but this has been relatively piecemeal and narrowly project-oriented. A related, broader concern of the MTE is for the project and MNE to plan for the "institutionalisation" of key project staff functions: there appears to be no clear vision for the institutional arrangements that should be put in place by or before the end of the project, in order to ensure that an effective conservation system for the Altai Sayan regions will be supported by an appropriate long-term institution.

This question is key for the project staff, at least some of whom should be able to look forward to continuing in similar jobs in conservation in the region, from a more secure institutional base. The basis of institutionalisation will be to encourage staff to begin working more closely with specific government officials and with herder groups on a day to day basis. This is also the way in which the project will achieve its best results. Accordingly, MTE **recommendation (9.3)** is for project management to plan and implement a more systematic program of professional development for all interested staff members over the life of the project that incorporates closer working links with government officials during the course of normal duties.

**MTE Recommendation (9.4)** is to provide the project with a much larger Project Office in Ulaanbaatar with immediate effect, ensuring that it is fully equipped<sup>26</sup>. The new office should include desk space for visiting consultants.

The project needs to provide interpreters and translators. There is still no translator attached to the landscape planning unit. However two translators were provided for the recent workshop in Khovd. As a result the workshop proceeded smoothly and the proceedings were translated within a few days of close. Interpreters are also needed by evaluators, and by visiting international consultants. Our own evaluation team lacked an interpreter for the Khovsgol trip. Similarly, the evaluation and monitoring of ASP is hindered by the lack of translated documents. This also affects the wider dissemination of project results. All technical documents including reports by short-term consultants should be translated into English. MTE **Recommendation (9.5)** is that the project recruits at least one full time interpreter and one full time translator for these tasks.

### 6.2.6 Financial Planning

**MTE recommendation (10)** is for the project management to prepare, use, monitor and report against a fresh Outputs budget, for each financial quarter and year, for the remainder of the project. This should be based on the revised hierarchy of Outcomes and Outputs (refer to **Recommendation 1a** and Section 6.1.1.2). All anticipated costs of achieving each substantive Output (including a share of "project management costs") should be included in the budget for each Output, and subsequently all relevant expenditure should be recorded under that Output. This will assist in proactively managing the budget and in implementing each Output more rigorously.

### 6.2.7 Sustainability

**MTE recommendation (11)** is for the project management to prepare simple strategies for sustainability and replication, as part of re-planning the project logical framework, budget and 3-year implementation plan, immediately following the MTE. The sustainability strategy should include plans for continuation of each of the key elements of the new conservation system that is to be introduced by the project, i.e. especially the new institution (or institutional arrangements) for inter-sectoral, inter-agency, collaborative and community-based governance and management of all natural resources in an area. The replication strategy should specify what the project and its key supporting partners are going to do to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> The inadequacy of the office has been noted in the official audit reports of 2006 and 2007. UNDP has written several letters to the State Secretary to deal with this issue. Even though the Ministry responded positively, this had not resulted in the required office space being provided to ASP at the time of the MTE.

facilitate extension and establishment of these new measures in new administrative areas (additional *sum, aimags* and regions).

# 7 LESSONS LEARNED

The Conclusions (Section 5) and Findings (Section 4) provide many lessons on the project's formulation and implementation. Principal amongst these are the following:

- 1. Multi-donor projects should not start before all donors' funds are available, especially when funds are not yet available from the majority funding partner.
- 2. All projects require a full inception in their first year in which the ToR and logistical framework are reviewed, and an implementation strategy is prepared for the project duration.
- 3. Projects such as ASP with regional teams can mobilise large numbers of local communities and other stakeholders with great potential effect.
- 4. Biodiversity conservation has the superficial appearance of being undemanding but is in fact highly technical. Consequently biodiversity projects require technical inputs and advice from international-level experts. This assumes a management style that understands and values the benefits of working with such experts.
- 5. It is essential that the PSC fulfils its critical role, i.e. that it meets regularly (with an agenda issued and minutes being taken), has the right mix of technical and stakeholder representation, is properly briefed by the Project Manager and his/her team, and provides effective feedback (on key strategic, policy and programme issues, not on day-to-day administration, staffing, work plan and budget approval) to the Project Manager and team.

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# ANNEXES

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# **ANNEX 1. Terms of Reference for Mid-term Evaluation**

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MIDTERM EVALUATION

# "COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN THE MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPES OF MONGOLIA'S ALTAI SAYAN ECO-REGION"

## UNDP/GEF PROJECT #39250

## Project background

The Altai Sayan Biodiversity conservation project is implemented between 2005 and 2011, funded by the Dutch Government, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UNDP. It, aims to ensure the long-term conservation of biodiversity in Mongolia's Altai-Sayan region by mitigating threats and promoting sustainable resource use practices by local communities. The project seeks to do this by: A) integrating biodiversity conservation objectives into sustainable natural resource use policies, programs, and practices; and B) linking traditional protected area management to the landscape around each area, including cross-border cooperation. By the end of the project, stakeholders will apply communities to resolve forest and grassland management problems and improve livelihoods through partnerships with Government and NGOs.

The Altai Sayan Ecoregion extends east-west for 2,000 km from the eastern-most tip of Kazakhstan to north-central Mongolia and south-central Russia and south-north for 1,500 km from western Mongolia and north-western China to south-central Russia. It is a WWF Global 200 eco-region, providing the habitat for large populations of globally threatened and vulnerable species such as the snow leopard (*Unica unica*), the Siberian ibex (*Capra sibirica*), musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*), Pallas' cat (*Felis manul*), and whooper swan (*Cygnus Cygnus*), and the region's umbrella species the Argali Sheep (*Ovis ammon*). The Mongolian Sayan area comprises a basin containing hundreds of lakes surrounded by mountains with elevations up to 3,000 meters. These form a watershed where two major vegetative zones associated with the southern edge of the Siberian boreal forest: the tundra and taiga converge with the grassland steppe zone.

The project has been designed in line with the Government's approach to sustainable development while conserving biodiversity and its national commitment to these goals fully recognizes that the well-being of the country depends upon the continued health of the country's natural environment. The Good Governance for Human Security Programme, approved by the Government in 2000, supports policy formulation, operationalization and implementation of the Government's Action Programme. The project has also been designed within the framework of UNDP-Mongolia Multi Year Funding Framework's (MYFF) third goal, which aims to ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into UNDP's planning and development processes at the national, regional and local levels.

A key part of the approach to sustainability are partnerships and the project seeks to develop low-cost alternatives for nature conservation and livelihoods that rely on existing or newly formed collaborative partnerships among national, ministries, NGOs, *Aimag, Soum* and *Bag*  (equivalent of province, district and sub-district) officials, and herder communities across the traditional sectoral boundaries. The project is designed to work with partners and programs that are scaled to local institutional and community capacity and emphasizes the long-term sustainability of local institutions. In parallel, the capacity of a cross-section of civil-society (herder groups and local NGOs) will be strengthened to sustain integrated conservation efforts over the long-term.

The project will strengthen regional cooperation between Russia, Kazakhstan, China and Mongolia for biodiversity conservation in the Altai Sayan through strengthening transboundary conservation mechanisms and institutional linkages<sup>27</sup>.

The project strategy is the application of landscape-scale conservation practices and perspectives to the productive landscape as a whole, and protected areas within it. The successful completion of the project will result in stakeholders devising innovative and adaptive practices to mitigate and prevent threats to biological diversity by applying new partnerships, conservation tools, information, and sustainable livelihoods to conserve biological diversity. The project will focus on helping people to develop sustainable livelihood options by providing business trainings and empowering people to access financial support and small loans. In general, the project avoids creating systems requiring expensive maintenance and upkeep, or establishing new expensive institutions.

<u>The overall objective of this project is:</u> Conservation and sustainable use of globally significant biological diversity in Mongolia's Altai Sayan Ecoregion.

**<u>Purpose</u>**: The successful completion of the project will result in stakeholders devising innovative and adaptive practices to mitigate and prevent threats to biological diversity by applying new partnerships, conservation tools, information, and sustainable livelihoods to conserve biological diversity.

The project will meet four Immediate Objectives and produce six main Outputs as follows:

# Immediate Objective 1: Biodiversity conservation objectives integrated into productive sector institutions and policies. (GEF Financed & Co-financed).

Output 1: Conservation Capacity of Productive Sector Institutions and Policies Is Strengthened.

Output 2: Information baseline established and strengthened as basis integrating conservation into productive sectors.

# Immediate Objective 2: To strengthen "traditional" protected area-based approaches by expanding their scope to include the landscape around them.

Output 3: Landscape-based approach to conservation established and operational

Output 4: Strengthened Transboundary Conservation Action and Institutional Linkages.

There are other two ongoing GEF-funded Eco-region conservation projects in Kazakhstan and Russia. A Steering Committee composed of stakeholders from all three countries already exists and its annual meetings will serve as a venue to share experiences and lessons learned.

# Immediate Objective 3: To successfully demonstrate how to integrate biodiversity into resource management and economic development practice & Policy.

Output 5: Grazing, forest-use, sport hunting management, and tourism, are re-oriented to support conservation while improving livelihoods.

Immediate Objective 4: To implement a project that learns from its successes and failures and shares these lessons and replicates best practices effectively among its own stakeholders and with others.

Output 6: Monitoring and evaluation is applied as tool for adaptive management, assessment of project impact/progress, and replication of best practices.

### Budget

The total approved budget for the project is US\$ 4,785,672, comprising:

UNDP	US\$ 200,000
Government of the Netherlands	US\$ 1,865,672
Global Environment Facility	US\$ 2,720,000

The National Project Director, who chairs the project Steering Committee, is appointed by the Ministry of Nature and Environment from a department dealing with strategy, planning, land use management, biodiversity conservation or protected area management in four target Aimags (Bayan Olgii, Uvs, Khovsgol, Khovd).

Within the project the National Project Manager is supported on administrative and operational issues by Research Officer, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, Community Development Officer, and Finance Officer based in the main project office which was shifted from Khovd city of the Altai Region to Ulaanbaatar in mid2008. In addition one International Technical Advisor will provide technical assistance and support to the National Project Manager.

The project M&E system includes annual project steering committee meetings, annual project performance reviews; mid-term evaluation, and final evaluation report, in addition annual financial audits are to be conducted.

# **Objectives of the Mid Term Evaluation for Altai Sayan Project**

The project Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is a UNDP M&E requirement for all GEF-supported medium and full size projects. It intends to provide an objective and independent assessment of project implementation and impact, including the documentation of lessons learned to guide future conservation efforts and make recommendations that might improve design and implementation of the project and as well as other UNDP/GEF projects. The

MTE will assess the performance and success of the project by looking at early signs of potential impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development and the attainment of global environmental goals and prompt midterm adjustments.

The evaluation shall review the operations of the entire project in Khovd, Bayan-Ulgii, Uvs and Khuvsgul project implementation units (PIU) and in Ulaanbaatar over 30 working days. Main stakeholders of the evaluation are UNDP Mongolia CO, the MNE, and all project implementation units.

It is considered as a significant opportunity to provide donors, government and project partners with an independent assessment of relevance and achievement of objectives and impact indicators, and to determine progress being made towards the achievement of outcomes with reference to the Project Document.

# Scope of the Evaluation

The MTE should cover the following broad areas:

- I. Project conceptualization, design and implementation approach; including execution modalities
- II. Continued project relevance, i.e., are the project outcomes consistent with the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy and country priorities and national priorities?
- III. Project ownership at the national and local levels
- IV. Stakeholder participation/public involvement, including gender differences in participation and influence .Consider the extent/effect of project staff working and collaborating with local authorities towards fulfilling project goals and objectives with future implications
- V. Project effectiveness progress achieved to date against planned outputs and suboutputs and likelihood of achieving planned objectives. The extent to which the project has been carried out in line with the planned objectives and outcomes.
- VI. Sustainability of project any results/outcome so far and impact of the project, including an assessment of planned replication mechanisms and exit strategies
- VII. Financial planning and sustainability, including the timely delivery and use of cofinancing
- VIII. Cost-effectiveness, including impacts of delays in project start up
- IX. Monitoring & evaluation and the application of adaptive management principles (including effective use of logframe, UNDP risk management system, the project reviews and reports, and other monitoring tools and mechanisms as appropriate)
- X. Relevance of the relative emphasis (in terms of resource allocation and other project efforts) between different project Objectives and outputs to achieve project objectives

# The specific issues to be considered by the project include the following

Project objectives and outputs	Specific Issues to be considered and recommended by the MTE
Immediate Objective 1: Biodiversity conservation objectives integrated into productive sector institutions and policies. (GEF Financed & Co-financed). Output 1: Conservation Capacity of Productive Sector Institutions and Policies Is Strengthened. Output 2: Information baseline established and strengthened as basis integrating conservation into productive sectors.	<ul> <li>A. Assess the impact of the project on the mainstreaming efforts towards biodiversity conservation in the project locations.</li> <li>B. Consider if the current selection of sectors selected for mainstreaming are relevant.</li> <li>C. Recommend strategies for strengthening mainstreaming and continued work beyond project end –i.e. which stakeholders' capacities should be strengthened so that they continue to act as champions for biodiversity conservation locally and nationally?</li> </ul>
Immediate Objective 2: To strengthen "traditional" protected area-based approaches by expanding their scope to include the landscape around them. Output 3: Landscape-based approach to conservation established and operational Output 4: Strengthened Transboundary Conservation Action and Institutional Linkages.	<ul> <li>D. Assess if current geographic focus of work within project locations are the most relevant to achieve global biodiversity conservation benefits.</li> <li>E. Assess and recommend ways to strengthen/ mainstream landscape based and transboundary cooperation.</li> </ul>
Immediate Objective 3: To successfully demonstrate how to integrate biodiversity into resource management and economic development practice & Policy. Output 5: Grazing, forest-use, sport hunting management, and tourism, are re-oriented to support conservation while improving	<ul> <li>F. Assess changes in Mongolian legal and policy context and its institutional framework to improve biodiversity conservation at the national, regional and local level and relevance to project implementation</li> <li>G. Evaluate the capacity of community groups involved in the project, their sustainability and the impact of their activities on biodiversity conservation</li> <li>H. Review the status of integrating sustainable development plans/incorporation of biodiversity conservation objective into the</li> </ul>

livelinooas.	planning framework at the Aimag and Soum level,					
	I. To what extent the information centers and eco-clubs serve as an important tool for awareness raising/biodiversity mainstreaming.					
	J. Make an assessment to which extent livelihood activities have successfully been adapted to have a more positive impact on biodiversity conservation.					
Immediate Objective 4: To	K. Assess the quality of baseline data, monitoring and assessment					
implement a project that learns	framework. Are there sound monitoring processes developed to					
from its successes and failures	measure changes in selected populations of wildlife, in species composition structure and density?					
and shares these lessons and						
replicates best practices	The strengths and weaknesses of the project's management					
stakeholders and with others.	structure, operations, and the various partnership arrangements of the project; communication flows.					
Output 6: Monitoring and evaluation is applied as tool for adaptive management, assessment of project impact/progress, and replication of best practices.	M. Assess the efficiency of the current setup of the main project office, Aimag- and Soum offices vis-à-vis project management and access to stakeholders in target biodiversity areas.					

# Selection criteria of the evaluation team

It is expected that the **evaluation team** will be chaired by one lead international consultant supported by one international consultant and two national consultants. The team of 4 consultants will be divided into 2 groups to undertake one area each and the teams will be made up of one international and one national consultant each.

A lead consultant will be selected to manage and coordinate the entire functional evaluation process, and ensure efficient division of tasks between the team members. The lead consultant will be responsible for integrating the reports into one consolidated joint evaluation report and for timely submission and presentation of the evaluation findings and recommendations at meeting with stakeholders.

# Specific tasks of the evaluation teams will be focused/divided into two following areas:

- 1. Management & Coordination, Monitoring & Evaluation and Research.
- 2. Biodiversity conservation / environment protection and livelihoods

The international consultants should have an advanced university degree and at least 15 years of work experience in the field of sustainable environment, sound knowledge about results-based management (especially results-oriented monitoring and evaluation). They should be familiar with UNDP/GEF projects and GEF policies and strategies and have some familiarity with Mongolia.

The national experts shall have a degree related to environmental management and be familiar with the environmental conditions in rural and urban Mongolia. Work experience with international development programs, preferably with UNDP will be an asset. Ability to travel to rural Mongolia required. Good knowledge of English and computer literacy preferred.

### **Products Expected from the Evaluation**

The evaluation shall report on the lessons learned from the project focusing on biodiversity conservation capacity in the Altai Sayan Ecoregion and on the opportunities for future assistance and improvement of project performance and effectiveness. The main products from the MTE are:

- Presentation of findings (verbal presentations will be made to all major stakeholders on the approach of the MTE and its preliminary findings)
- An interim <u>draft</u> report
- A final comprehensive midterm evaluation report will be an independent and comprehensive document with annexes as necessary. However, the main report should not exceed 50 pages. 3 copies of the final, bound report to UNDP for distribution shall be submitted and an electronic copy (MS Word) of the report included.

# The minimum requirements for the content of the final version of MTE report are given below:

#### 1. Executive summary

Brief description of project Context and purpose of the evaluation Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

#### 2. Introduction

Purpose of the evaluation Key issues addressed Methodology of the evaluation Structure of the evaluation

### 3. The project(s) and its development context

Project start and its duration Problems that the project seek to address Immediate and development objectives of the project Main stakeholders Results expected

## 4. Findings and Conclusions

In addition to a descriptive assessment, all <u>criteria marked with (R) should be rated</u> using the following divisions: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory

### 4.1. Project Formulation

<u>Conceptualization/Design</u> (R). This should assess the approach used in design and an appreciation of the appropriateness of problem conceptualization and whether the selected intervention strategy addressed the root causes and principal threats in the project area. It should also include an assessment of the logical framework and whether the different project components and activities proposed to achieve the objective were appropriate, viable and responded to contextual institutional, legal and regulatory settings of the project. It should also assess the indicators defined for guiding implementation and measurement of achievement and whether lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) were incorporated into project design.

- <u>Country-ownership/Driveness</u>. Assess the extent to which the project idea/conceptualization had its origin within national, sectoral and development plans and focuses on national environment and development interests.
- <u>Stakeholder participation</u> (R) Assess information dissemination, consultation, and "stakeholder" participation in design stages.

<u>Replication approach</u>. Determine the ways in which lessons and experiences coming out of the project were/are to be replicated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects (this also related to actual practices undertaken during implementation).

<u>Other aspects</u> to assess in the review of Project formulation approaches would be UNDP comparative advantage as IA for this project; the consideration of linkages between projects and other interventions within the sector and the definition of clear and appropriate management arrangements at the design stage.

#### 4.2. Project Implementation

Implementation Approach (R). This should include assessments of the following aspects:

(i) The use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to this as a response to changing conditions and/or feedback from M and E activities if required. (ii) Other elements that indicate adaptive management such as comprehensive and realistic work plans routinely developed that reflect adaptive management and/or; changes in management arrangements to enhance implementation.

(iii) The project's use/establishment of electronic information technologies to support implementation, participation and monitoring, as well as other project activities.

(iv) The general operational relationships between the institutions involved and others and how these relationships have contributed to effective implementation and achievement of project objectives.

(v) Technical capacities associated with the project and their role in project development, management and achievements.

<u>Monitoring and evaluation (R)</u>. Including an assessment as to whether there has been adequate periodic oversight of activities during implementation to establish the extent to which inputs, work schedules, other required actions and outputs are proceeding according to plan; whether formal evaluations have been held and whether action has been taken on the results of this monitoring oversight and evaluation reports.

<u>Stakeholder participation (R)</u>. This should include assessments of the mechanisms for information dissemination in project implementation and the extent of stakeholder participation in management, emphasizing the following:

- (i) The production and dissemination of information generated by the project.
- (ii) Local resource users and NGOs participation in project implementation and decision making and an analysis of the

strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project in this arena.

- (iii) The establishment of partnerships and collaborative relationships developed by the project with local, national and international entities and the effects they have had on project implementation.
- (iv) Involvement of governmental institutions in project
   implementation, the extent of governmental support of the project.

Financial Planning: Including an assessment of:

- (i) The actual project cost by objectives, outputs, activities
- (ii) The cost-effectiveness of achievements
- (iii) Financial management (including disbursement issues)
- (iv) Co-financing <sup>28</sup>
- <u>Sustainability.</u> Extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after it has come to an end. Relevant factors include for example: development of a sustainability strategy, establishment of financial and economic instruments and mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the economy or community production activities.
- Execution and implementation modalities. This should consider the effectiveness of the UNDP counterpart and Project Co-ordination Unit participation in selection, recruitment, assignment of experts, consultants and national counterpart staff members and in the definition of tasks and responsibilities; quantity, quality and timeliness of inputs for the project with respect to execution responsibilities, enactment of necessary legislation and budgetary provisions and extent to which these may have affected implementation and sustainability of the Project; quality and timeliness of inputs by UNDP and GoC and other parties responsible for providing inputs to the project, and the extent to which this may have affected the smooth implementation of the project.

### 4.3. Results

Attainment of Outcomes/ Achievement of objectives (R): Including a description <u>and</u> <u>rating</u> of the extent to which the project's objectives (environmental and developmental) were achieved using Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory ratings. If the project did not establish a baseline (initial conditions), the evaluators should seek to determine it through the use of special methodologies so that achievements, results and impacts can be properly established.

This section should also include reviews of the following:

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Please see guidelines at the end of Annex 1 of these TORs for reporting of co-financing

<u>Sustainability</u>: Including an appreciation of the extent to which benefits continue, within or outside the project domain after GEF assistance/external assistance in this phase has come to an end. Contribution to upgrading skills of the national staff

#### 5. Recommendations:

Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

#### 6. Lessons learned

This should highlight the best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success.

#### 7. Evaluation report Annexes

Evaluation TORs Itinerary List of persons interviewed Summary of field visits List of documents reviewed Questionnaire used and summary of results Comments by stakeholders (only in case of discrepancies with evaluation findings and conclusions)

#### METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology will be determined by the evaluation team, guided by the requirements of GEF and UNDP as articulated in various guidelines, policies, and manuals on the conduct of evaluations and for GEF projects as well as key project documents such as the approved GEF project brief, the final UNDP project document, the inception workshop report, the project logframe and annual budgets and workplans, the annual Project Implementation review, Project Steering Committee minutes as available, and other technical reports and documents as relevant. A list of key documents is given in Annex II.

The review will be carried out during a total period of 30 working days in October/November 2008 and its evaluation methodology should be clearly documented in the report including comprehensive details of the following:

- Review of relevant project documents and reports
- Conducted consultations with key project stakeholders in Ulaanbaatar and
- Accomplished field visits to project locations
- Techniques and approached used for data gathering, verification and analysis

#### Implementation Arrangements

The assessment will be carried out over 30 <u>working days</u> in October – November 2008. The work is scheduled to commence on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2008 and be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2008. A preliminary work plan is shown in Annex I.

The Altai Sayan project staff shall provide any necessary logistical support. The staff will assemble the suggested documents and prepare for the field trip. The evaluation team shall use the office space of the ALTAI SAYAN project. Team members are expected to bring their own computers/laptops for the written work. The mission will produce the following deliverables by the dates specified:

- A draft report submission by 21 November 2008.
- A final report by 30 November 2008.

The tentative program of the MTE field mission is shown below, and a more detailed schedule is under development.

Dates	Item
15-21 October	Review of main documents from homebase
22-29 October	Meetings with stakeholders in Ulaan Baatar
15 October – 19	Field missions in Khovd, Bayan Olgii, Uvs
November	and Khovsgol
20 – 21 November	Debriefing in Ulaan Baatar and submission of draft report
22- 30 November	Preparation of final report from homebase

A tentative list of people to be consulted is given in Annex II, it will be further refined in consultation with the evaluation team and other key project partners.

### Focal persons

MNE	A. Enkhbat			
	National Project Director			
UNDP	Onno van den Heuvel			
	Programme Officer for Biodiversity Conservation			
UNDP Regional	Sameer Karki			
Centre in Bangkok	UNDP/GEF Regional technical advisor on biodiversity			

# **ANNEX I. Implementation Arrangements**

No	Task	Week 1	Week II	Week II1	Week 1V	Week V	Week VI
1	Review of project documents						
2	Meetings with UNDP, MNE, Project Staff						
3	Meet with Stakeholders in UB						
4	Field trips to project sites (Uvs, Bayan Ulgii, Khuvsgul), meeting with stakeholders, visiting soum centres, meeting governor, selected herder groups						
11	Presentation of findings to UNDP and MNE						
12	Draft Report writing and submission						
13	Finalize Report						

# ToR: ANNEX II. List of key persons to be interviewed during the evaluation field mission

#### Ulaanbaatar:

- UNDP Country Office
- Ministry of Nature and Environment, NPD
- Steering committee Members

### Project sites:

Community level:

- > Community beneficiaries such as herder groups (nokhorlols)
- Secondary school environmental clubs
- Individual beneficiaries
- Info/community centres

#### Local Authorities:

- Aimag governors
- Special Protected Area Administrations
- Soum authorities

#### Project sites

Project staff, including; CEDOs, Social Mobilisers and project Coordinators of selected sites for the evaluation

#### ToR Annex III. List of key documents to be reviewed for the Evaluation

- Project Document
- > Progress reports
- > Annual and Quarterly Work plans: Aimag units and central plans
- Correspondences between UNDP, MNE
- > Audit Reports on the project
- Biodiversity Action Plan (1997)
- > Mongolia Environment Monitor of the World Bank
- > Mongolia State of the Environment 2005
- National Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan
- Aimag Development Plans
- Government of Mongolia, UNDP, 2003, Project Document, the Conservation of the Great Gobi Ecosystem and its Umbrella Species

# **ANNEX 2. Itinerary and List of Persons Consulted – Team 1**

Team 1: Martyn Murray (International Consultant), Badam Ochir (National Consultant) and Kirk Olson (Research)

Date/time	Meeting/Focus Group Discussion
	Ulaanbaatar
Fri. 24 Oct 2008	
	Arrival of Martyn Murray (MM) in Ulaanbaatar
Sat. 25 Oct 2008	
14.00-18.00	MM meeting with Dr. Kirk Olson (KO), assistant to the evaluation team
Sun. 26 Oct 2008	
12.00-14.00	MM & KO initial meeting with: Mr. Onno Van Den Heuvel (VDH), Programme Officer for Biodiversity Conservation, UNDP, Mongolia; Ms. Monika Šikulová (MS), UNV/UNDP Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
Mon. 27 Oct 2008	
09.00-10.00	Security briefing UNDP office
10.00-12.00	MM & KO briefing in UNDP office with VDH & MS
15.00-17.00	MM & KO briefing meeting with Ms. U. Tungalag, Environment Practice Manager, UNDP, Mongolia, VDH & MS
Tue. 28 Oct 2008	
14.00-15.00	MM & KO briefing in UNDP office with VDH & MS. Meeting with Badam Ochir (BO) (National Consultant)
15.00-18.00	Meeting with Ms Solongo, Administrative Officer Altai Sayan Project Office, UB
Wed. 29 Oct 2008	
13.00-15.00	MM meeting with Ms. Jargal Jamsranjav, National Landscape Planning Consultant, Altai Sayan Project
15.00-16.00	Conference call in UNDP Office: MM, KO, VDH, MS and Mr. Sameer Karki, Regional Technical Advisor for Biodiversity (GEF), UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok
Thu. 30 Oct 2008	
16.00-18.00	MM & KO meeting with Batbold Dorjgurkhem, WWF
	MM, BO & KO field visit to Khovsgol Aimag
Fri. 31 Oct 2008	
08.30-12.30	Travel to airport and fly to Moron, Khovsgol
8.00-10.00	MM, BO & KO meeting with PIU Coordinator and project team-5
	participants
S-4 1 N 2009	
Sat. 1 Nov 2008	MA DO & KO marting with Ulary Half - Common Chief
10.00-12.00	Environmental Inspector PILI Coordinator 2 Rangers
12.00-13.00	Visit to Ulaan Uul School Eco-Club.
14.00-17.30	Meetings with 3 Herder Groups from Ulaan Uul (Medicinal Plants,
	Mountain Spring Rehabilitation, Craft Ware and Dairy)
Sun. 2 Nov 2008	
Morning	Travel to Renchinlhumbe <i>sum</i>
13.30-15.00	Meetings with Nyamrenchin (head of Forest Protection Herder Group)
Date/time	Meeting/Focus Group Discussion
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	and Renchindavaa (Ranger)
Afternoon	Travel to Tsagaan Nuur sum
Evening	Travel to Tsaatan Camp
Mon. 3 Nov 2008	
Morning	Meetings with Bayam Dalay (headman), Setski and Yadam of Tszaatan HG
Afternnon	Travel to Tsagaanuur <i>sum</i> (meetings with Nuurin Khishig, Bayanbuurug and Gurvansaikhan HGs)
15.00-17.00	Meeting with Dastorch on history of commercial fishing and proposal for fish hatchery
17.00-18.00	Meeting with Harumai (First Taiga <i>Bagh</i> ) on ASP supported Cultural Centre and programme of events
18.00-19.00	Meeting with Dtomso (Booshtik Cooperative Group, Left Taiga Group) on ecotourism with Tsaatan
19.00-20.00	Meeting with Bainburk Group (Fishing Community)
Tue. 4 Nov 2008	
Morning	Drive to Renchinlhumbe sum; meeting with Sum Ranger
12.30-13.30	Meetings with tour operators (Mishig and Sanjidmaa) from Boojam
14.30-15.00	Visit to Renchinlhumbe School Nogoon Bus Eco-Club
Afternoon	Drive to Ulaan Uul
Wed. 5 Nov 2008	
Morning	Drive to Khoridol Saridag Nuruu SPA
13.00-15.00	Meeting with 3 Rangers (O. Byambaa, B. Batdorj, Ts. Nyamkhuu)
15.00-19.30	Drive to Hatgal
Thu. 6 Nov 2008	
09.00-13.00	Khovsgol PIU head office team (Tumursukh - Local Coordinator, Myagmarjalbuu - Local Capacity Training, Lhavgatsogt – SM, Byambaa – SM, Buyankhisig – SM, Batkhuu – SM, Bat-Erdene –Assistant)
13.00-16.00	Meetings with 4 Community Groups (Jinst Orgil, Uran Gar, Uran Baigal and Bayan uul covering Handcrafts, Community-based Forestry, Sewing, and Horse-riding)
16.00-18.00	Meetings at Khovsgol Lake PAA with GanSukh TS (Park director), Kh Purevdorj (Nature Protection & Monitoring), Jamiyanjav, B. (Tourism and Land)
Fri. 7 Nov 2008	
Morning	Drive to Muron; Travel to Ulaanbaatar
Sat. 8 Nov 2008	
Day	Briefing for second field trip
	MM & BO field visit to Bayan Olgii Aimag
Sun. 9 Nov 2008	
Morning	Flight to Ulgii
11.00-15.00	Meeting Bayan Olgii project team. Team briefing from A. Atai Mongol Altai Spec. PAA Director, T. Khonisbek SM, D. Davkharbayar CEDO, Kh. Venera Administrative and Financial Assistant
Afternoon	Drive to Deluun <i>sum</i>
Mon. 10 Nov 2008	
Morning	Meeting with T. Khonisbek SM and presentation of activities

Date/time	Meeting/Focus Group Discussion
Morning	Visit to Kinjebek Eco-Club
Afternoon	Visit Tahit, Kok Tobe HGs
	Drive to Altai sum
Tue 11 Nov 2008	
Morning	Presentation on Altai <i>sum</i> project outcomes (S. Amangul, SM) Meeting with Shar gobi HG
Afternnon	Drive to Olgii
Wed. 12 Nov 2008	
Morning	Travel to Sagsai, Presentation on Sagsai <i>sum</i> project outcomes. Meeting with Sagsai <i>sum</i> Governor (Bolat), J. <i>Sum</i> Environmental Inspector (Gezimkhan), Land Officer (Amanbek)
	Visit Irves HG
Afternoon	Drive to Border Post in south of Sagsai sum
Thu. 13 Nov 2008	
Morning	Meetings with officer i/c of Border Post Meeting with Rangers and representatives of local herder community (12 families) Drive to Tsengel <i>sum</i>
Afternoon	Presentation of project outcomes. Meetings with Environmental Inspector (Tilevbay) and SM (M. Tsengelsaikhan) Travel to Ulaanhus <i>sum</i>
Fri. 14 Nov 2008	
Morning	Meeting in Governors office, Ulaanhus <i>sum</i> with Mr Onashbay (Governor), Arashkhan (Env. Inspector), Bopay (Buffer zone officer) and Attaugerel (SM). Project presentation Visit to Eco-Park
Afternoon	Visit Bayanzurkh Mountain (Argali habitat) and HG Visit Arkhar HG Drive to Olgii
Sat 15 Nov 2008	
Morning	Meeting with Aimag Governor (Khaval)
Afternoon	Meeting with Mongol Altai SPA Administration. Presentation by PAA
Sun, 16 Nov	
Morning	Team travels from Olgii to Ulaanbaatar
17 – 22 Nov	Ulaanbaatar
Sun. 23 Nov	MM depart for UK

# **ANNEX 3. Itinerary and List of Organisations Met, Team 2**

1 November 2008	Uvs Aimag PIU office Uvs Aimag EPA Uvs Aimag Governor Border Patrol Authority Uvs lake basin SPA administration
2 November	Uvs PIU office Ulaangom soum, Agro-Park Tarialan soum
3 November	Ulaangom Turgen soum Sagil soum
4 November	Tsagaan shuvuut SPA Border Patrol troops unit
5 November	Bukhmurun soum Yamaat Herder Group
6 – 7 November	Khovd soum centre
8 – 9 November	Khovd aimag
10 November	Khovd project office Khovd Governor office PIU office
11 November	Must soum Soum Governor office Must soum visit to herder family
12 November	Tsetseg soum Bayan-Ovoo Bag visit to herder family,
13 November	Tsetseg soum Information centre Meeting with soum government officers and PAA Heteliin elzee Cooperative ger
14 November	Khowd aimag centre
	nitova aimag centre

# MTE Itinerary achieved (Peter Hunnam & M. Ganbat)

Uvs Aimag         D. Togtokhbayar         PIU manager           PIU office         J. Basanjav         Community Empowerment & Development Officer (CED0)           D. Zolzaya         Finance officer           D. Choijilsuren         Ulangom soum Social mobilizer (SM)           J. Erdene         Driver           Aimag EPA         U. Murdorj           O. Davaanyam         Senior specialist           Border Patrol Authority         D. Damdinsuren           G. Baatarsukh         Head of Staff           Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar           Vis Almag         N. Tsoggerel           Kharkhiraa bag, Bayan zuukh Herders group leader           Almag om soum, Agro-Park         B. Hehee           Khet-Tsakh Cooperative, Community group leader           Almagom         B. Schoold           Ulaangom         B. Sahoold           Tarialan soum         Z. Tegshjargal           Soum SM         S. Tsogoo           Sagil soum         Y. Myagmarjav           Sagil soum         Y. Myagmarjav           Sagan shuvuut' SPA         B. Altangerel           SPA ranger         SPA ranger           Tradalan soum         S. Khandsuren           Turgen soum SM         S. Stagoal	Meeting/Location	Individuals consulted	
PIU office     J. Basanjav     Community Empowerment & Development Officer (CEDO)       D. Zolzaya     Finance officer       D. Choijilsuren     Ulaangom soum Social mobilizer (SM)       J. Erdene     Driver       Aimag EPA     U. Murdorj       Senior ranger     B. Bat-Ochir       Aimag governor     B. Bat-Ochir       Border Patrol Authority     D. Damdinsuren       Head of Frontier toops Major     G. Bastarsukh       Head of Staff     Uvs Iake basin SPA       Uvs Iake basin SPA     N. Ankhbayar       Head of Staff     Uvs Aimag       PIU office     N. Tooggerel       Kharkhiraa bag, Bayan zuukh Herders group leader       PIU office     N. Noost       Member     S. Noost       Tarialan soum     Z. Tegshjargal       Soum SM     S. Taogoo       Sagil soum     Y. Myagmajav       Soum SM     D. Shuumarjav       Sagil soum     Y. Myagmajav       Soum SM     S. Kandsuren       Tsagaan shuvuut' SPA     B. Altangerel       Vavaanjarya     Soum SM       Sagil soum     Y. Myagmajav       Soum SM     D. Shuumarjav       Soum SM     B. Altangerel       YA wagmajaya     Soum SM       Sagil soum     N. Bazolaphilai       Front	Uvs Aimag	D. Togtokhbayar	PIU manager
D. Zołzaya         Finance officer           J. Erdene         Driver           Aimag EPA         U. Murdorj         Senior specialist           O. Davaanyam         Senior specialist         O. Davaanyam           Border Patrol Authority         D. Damdinsuren         Head of Frontier troops Major           G. Bastarsukh         Head of Staff         Uvs Iake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar           Uvs Jamag         N. Tsoggerel         Kharkhiraa bag. Bayan zuukh Herders group leader           PIU office         N. Tsoggerel         Kharkhiraa bag. Bayan zuukh Herders group leader           Vus Jamag         N. Tsoggerel         Kharkhiraa bag. Bayan zuukh Herders group leader           PIU office         A. Noost         Member           Ulaangom soum, Agro-Park         B. Hehee         Khet-Tsakh Cooperative, Community group leader           Tarialan soum         Z. Tegshjargal         Soum SM           S. Tsogoo         Soum SM         Soum SM           Sagil soum         Y. Myagmarjav         Soum vice governor           Kh. Bayanjargal         Soum ranger         Soum ranger           Tragen shuvuut"SPA         B. Altangerel         SPA ranger           4 November         B. Davaasuren         Volunteer ranger           Frontier troops unit <t< td=""><td>PIU office</td><td>J. Baasanjav</td><td>Community Empowerment &amp; Development Officer (CEDO)</td></t<>	PIU office	J. Baasanjav	Community Empowerment & Development Officer (CEDO)
D. Choljilsuren         Ulaangom soum Social mobilizer (SM)           J. Erdene         Driver           Aimag EPA         U. Murdorj         Senior specialist           O. Dawanyam         Senior specialist         O.           Border Patrol Authority         D. Damöinsuren         Head of Fontier troops Major           G. Baatarsukh         Head of Staff         Uvs lake basin SPA           Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar         Head of Staff           Uvs Jamag         N. Tsoggerel         Kharkhiraa bag, Bayan zuukh Herders group leader           PIU office         E. Hehee         Khet-Tsakh Cooperative, Community group leader           Ulaangom soum, Agro-Park         E. Hehee         Khet-Tsakh Cooperative, Community group leader           Ulaangom         E. Ganbold         WWF officer in Ulaangom           Ulaangom         B. Ganbold         WWF officer in Ulaangom           Turgen soum         Ts. Khandsuren         Turgen soum SM           Sagil soum         Y. Myagmarjav         Soum vice governor           Kh. Bayanjargal         Soum ranger           Tsagaan shuvuut" SPA         B. Altangerel         SPA vasuren           Volunteer ranger         B. Davaasuren         Volunteer ranger           Tsagaan shuvuut" SPA         B. Bayasasuren		D. Zolzaya	Finance officer
J. Erdene         Driver           Aimag EPA         U. Murdorj         Senior specialist           O. Davaanyam         Senior ranger           Aimag governor         B. Bat-Ochir         Aimag vice governor           Border Patrol Authority         D. Damdinsuren         Head of Frontier troops Major           G. Baatarsukh         Head of Staff         Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhabyar           Uvs Jake basin SPA         N. Ankhabyar         Head of Staff           Uvs Aimag         N. Tsoggerel         Kharkhiraa bag, Bayan zuukh Herders group leader           PIU office         N. Nost         Member           Tarialan soum         Z. Tegshjargal         Soum SM           S. Tsogoo         Soum SM         S. Tsogoo           Jaangom         B. Ganbold         WWF officer in Ulaangom           Turgen soum         T. Khandsuren         Turgen soum SM           Sagil soum         Y. Myagmarjav         Soum SM           Sagil soum         Y. Myagmarjav         Soum SM           Sagil soum         S. Bayandalai         Frontier troops unit's head           Bukhmurun soum         P. Batjargal         Soum SM           D. Sausuren         Volunteer ranger           Frontier troops unit         S. Bayandalai		D. Choijilsuren	Ulaangom soum Social mobilizer (SM)
Aimag EPA     U. Murdorj     Senior specialist       Aimag governor     B. Bat-Ochir     Aimag vice governor       Border Patrol Authority     D. Damdinsuren     Head of Frontier troops Major       G. Baatarsukh     Head of Staff       Uvs lake basin SPA     N. Ankhbayar     Head of Staff       Uvs Aimag     N. Tsoggerel     Kharkhiraa bag, Bayan zuukh Herders group leader       PIU office     N. Tsoggerel     Kharkhiraa bag, Bayan zuukh Herders group leader       Vis Jake basin SPA     N. Hoost     Member       Tarialan soum, Agro-Park     B. Hehee     Khet-Tsakh Cooperative, Community group leader       A. Noost     Member     Truit specialist       Tarialan soum     Z. Tegshjargal     Soum SM       S. Tsogoo     Soum ranger     Ulaangom       Ulaangom     B. Ganbold     WWF officer in Ulaangom       Turgen soum     Ts. Khandsuren     Turgen soum SM       Sagil soum     Y. Myagmarjav     Soum SM       Sagil soum     Y. Myagmarjav     Soum SM       Sagan shuvuut "SPA     B. Altangerel     SPA ranger       Yamaat Herder Group     B. Bayandalai     Frontier troops unit's head       Bukhmurun soum     P. Batgiargal     Soum SM       D. Sainbileg     Yamaat Herder Group     B. Erdenebaatar       D. Sainbileg		J. Erdene	Driver
O. Davaanyam         Senior ranger           Aimag governor         8. Bat-Ochir         Aimag vice governor           Border Patrol Authority         D. Damdinsuren         Head of Frontier troops Major           G. Baatarsukh         Head of Staff           Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar         Head of administration           Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar         Head of administration           Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar         Head of Administration           Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar         Head of Administration           Usanger         N. Tooggerel         Kharkhinaa bag, Bayan zuukh Herders group leader           PlU office	Aimag EPA	U. Murdorj	Senior specialist
Aimag governor         B. Bat-Ochir         Aimag vice governor           Border Patrol Authority         D. Damdinsuren         Head of Frontier troops Major           G. Baatarsukh         Head of Staff           Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar         Head of Staff           Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar         Head of Staff           Uvs Aimag         N. Tsoggerel         Kharkhiraa bag, Bayan zuukh Herders group leader PIU office           Ulangom soum, Agro-Park         B. Hehee         Khet-Tsakh Cooperative, Community group leader A. Noost           Tarialan soum         Z. Tegshjargal         Soum SM           S. Tsogoo         Soum SM           Sagil soum         S. Tsogoo         Soum SM           Turgen soum         Ts. Khandsuren         Turgen soum SM           Sagil soum         Y. Myagmarjav         Soum SM           D. Shuumarjav         Soum SM         Soum source governor           Kh. Bayanjargal         Soum ranger         Soum SM           Tsagaan shuvuut* SPA         B. Altangerel         SPA ranger           4 November         S. Bayandalai         Frontier troops unit's head           Bukhmurun soum         P. Batjargal         Soum SM           D. Batul         Uvs aimag EPA officer         Buyantsog     <		O. Davaanyam	Senior ranger
Border Patrol Authority         D. Damdinsuren G. Baatarsukh         Head of Staff           Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar         Head of Staff           Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar         Head of administration           Uvs Jake basin SPA         N. Toggerel         Kharkhiraa bag. Bayan zuukh Herders group leader PIU office           Ulaangom soum, Agro-Park         B. Hehee         Kharkhiraa bag. Bayan zuukh Herders group leader A. Noost           Tarialan soum         Z. Tegshjargal         Soum SM           S. Tsogoo         Soum ranger           Ulaangom         B. Ganbold         WWF officer in Ulaangom           Turgen soum         Ts. Khandsuren         Turgen soum SM           Sagil soum         Y. Myagmarjav         Soum ranger           Tsagaan shuvuut" SPA         B. Altangerel         SPA ranger           4 November         B. Bayandalai         Frontier troops unit's head           Bukhmurun soum         P. Batargal         Soum SM           D. Batzul         Uvs aimage PA officer           B. Batzul         Uvs aimag PA officer           B. Buyantsog         Yamaat Herder Group           B. Erdenebaatar         Turgen mountain SPA ranger           V. Khovd soum         N. Bat-Orshikh         Khovd soum SM <td< td=""><td>Aimag governor</td><td>B. Bat-Ochir</td><td>Aimag vice governor</td></td<>	Aimag governor	B. Bat-Ochir	Aimag vice governor
G. Baatarsukh         Head of Staff           Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar         Head of administration           Uvs Aimag         N. Tsoggerel         Kharkhiraa bag. Bayan zuukh Herders group leader           Ull angom soum, Agro-Park         B. Hehee         Kharkhiraa bag. Bayan zuukh Herders group leader           Ullaangom soum, Agro-Park         B. Hehee         Khet-Tsakh Cooperative, Community group leader           Tarialan soum         Z. Tegshjargal         Soum SM           Soum SM         S. Tsogoo         Soum ranger           Ulaangom         B. Ganbold         WWF officer in Ulaangom           Turgen soum         Ts. Khandsuren         Turgen soum SM           Sagil soum         Y. Myagmarjav         Soum SM           Sagil soum         Y. Myagmarjav         Soum som SM           Sagaan shuvuut" SPA         8. Altangerel         SPA ranger           4 November         B. Davasauren         Volunter ranger           Frontier troops unit         S. Bayandalai         Frontier troops unit's head           Bukhmurun soum         P. Batjargal         Soum SM         D. Batzul           D. Satual         Uvs aike protected areas administration biologist           Yamaat Herder Group         8. Erdenebaatar         Turgen mountain SPA ranger	Border Patrol Authority	D. Damdinsuren	Head of Frontier troops Major
Uvs lake basin SPA         N. Ankhbayar         Head of administration           Uvs Aimag PIU office         N. Tsoggerel         Kharkhiraa bag, Bayan zuukh Herders group leader           Ulaangom soum, Agro-Park         B. Hehee         Kharkhiraa bag, Bayan zuukh Herders group leader           A. Noost         Member           Ts. Nyamaa         Fruit specialist           Tarialan soum         Z. Tegshjargal         Soum SM           S. Tsogoo         Soum SM           Ulaangom         B. Ganbold         WWF officer in Ulaangom           Turgen soum         Ts. Khandsuren         Turgen soum SM           Sagil soum         Y. Myagmarjav         Soum SM           D. Shuumarjav         Soum vice governor         Kh. Bayanjargal           Soum vice governor         K. B. Bayanjargal         Soum smger           Tragaan shuvuut" SPA         B. Altangerel         SPA ranger           4 November         B. Bayandalai         Frontier troops unit's head           Bukhmurun soum         P. Batjargal         Soum SM           D. Batzul         Uvs lake protected areas administration biologist           Yamaat Herder Group         B. Erdenebaatar         Turgen mountain SPA ranger           Vamaat Herder Group         B. Bal-Orshikh         Khovd Soum SM		G. Baatarsukh	Head of Staff
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Khovd Governor office     N. Damba     Head of Aimag's Civil Hural (Parliament)       D. Enkhbold     Vice Governor of Khovd Aimag       Ch. Tumendemberel     Head of Aimag EPA       D. Chinbat     Head of Khar us Lake protected area		Amanda	Passe Corns volunteer
Ch. Ganhuyag     Driver       Khovd Governor office     N. Damba     Head of Aimag's Civil Hural (Parliament)       D. Enkhbold     Vice Governor of Khovd Aimag       Ch. Tumendemberel     Head of Aimag EPA       D. Chinbat     Head of Khar us Lake protected area		D. Purevdori	Driver
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D. Chinbat Head of Khar us Lake protected area		Ch. Tumendemberel	Head of Aimag EPA
		D. Chinbat	Head of Khar us Lake protected area

# Organisations and individuals consulted (Peter Hunnam & M. Ganbat)

	P. Altankhuyag	Officer of IIEPCDep.
	D. Narandorj	Social policy department head
	J. Tsend-Ayush	Head of Industry, Infrastructure, Environment and Policy coordination Department
PIU office	Ch. Tumendemberel	Head of Aimag EPA
	D. Chinbat	Head of Khar us Lake protected area
Must soum	Ch. Enkhbaatar	Soum Governor
Soum Governor office	D. Tumenkhuu	ASP Social Mobilizer
	T. Altansukh	Head of Gurvan alag HG
	P. Davanyam	Head of Ugalz HG
	D. Gankhuyag	Head of Tsagaan temeet HG
Must soum Visit to herder	S. Baldandorj	Member of Gurvan alag HG
family	D. Bayasgalan	
Tsetseg soum	S. Dash-Chimed	Head of Myangan ugalzat HG
Bayan-Ovoo Bag visit to herder family	B. Nyamjav	Member of HG and his wife
Tsetseg soum	S. Oynchimeg	Head of soum governor office
Information centre	J. Khaisdavaa	Head of KHar us nuur protected area brunch
	Ts. Dashdorj	Soum vice governor
	Ts. Jambalsuren	Environmental Inspector
	B. Bilegt	Soum SM
	A. Barsuren	Protected area ranger
	Ch. Galbadrakh	Protected area ranger
	S. Tumurkhuyag	Protected area ranger
	B. Tsetsegbadam	Protected area research officer
	Kh. Purevdorj	Land officer
	N. Elzee	Heteliin elzee HG head
Heteliin elzee Cooperative	N. Elzee	Head of HG
ger		

# ANNEX 4. Altai Sayan Project Logical Framework in Project Document and Revised Versions

### Parts 4a to 4d

# Annex 4a. Altai Sayan Project Logical Framework

from Project Document (2006) Annex ii: Logical Framework Matrix

Overall Objective	Conservation and sustainable use of globally significant mountain biological diversity in Mongolia's Altai Sayan Ecoregion
Purpose	The successful completion of the project will result in stakeholders devising innovative and adaptive practices to mitigate and prevent threats to biological diversity by applying new partnerships, conservation tools, information, and sustainable livelihoods to conserve biological diversity.
"Output" 1	Conservation capacity of productive sector institutions and policies is strengthened
"Output" 2	Information baseline established and strengthened as basis for integrating conservation into productive sectors
"Output" 3	Landscape-based approach to conservation established and operational
"Output" 4	Strengthened trans-boundary conservation action and institutional linkages
"Output" 5	Grazing, forest-use, sport hunting management, and tourism, are re-oriented to support conservation while improving livelihoods
"Output" 6	Monitoring and evaluation is applied as a tool for adaptive management, assessment of project impact/progress and replication of best practices

# Annex 4b. Altai Sayan Project objectives

Objective	Concernation and suctainable use of globally significant biological diversity in
Objective	Conservation and sustainable use of globally significant biological diversity in Mongolio?c Altoi Sovon eco, region
Durnose	The successful completion of the project will result in stakeholders devising innovative
<u>i uipose</u>	and adaptive practices to mitigate and prevent threats to biological diversity by applying
	new partnerships, conservation tools, information, and sustainable livelihoods to conserva-
	hiological diversity
Immediate	Biodiversity conservation objectives integrated into productive sector institutions and
Objective 1	nolicies
Output 1:	Conservation capacity of productive sector institutions and policies is strengthened
Activity 1.1	Strengthen cross-sectoral Aimag Councils for Sustainable Development (ACSD) to
Territy 1.1	integrate conservation and development in each of the four aimags
Activity 1.2	Herder families form herder communities as a basis for community-based development
11001101 1.2	and narticipatory management of natural resources
Activity 1.3	Integrate biodiversity into productive sector policies and strengthen policy enforcement
nouvity 1.5	1 3 1 Enable the MNE and MFAg to define clearly their key roles in promoting
	conservation in the productive landscape and strengthen their cross-agency collaboration
	for the same.
	1.3.2 Strengthen informed decision making.
	1.3.3 Strengthen environmental law enforcement.
Activity 1.4	Build constituency for sustainable development and conservation.
5	1.4.1 Quantify values and benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem health.
	1.4.2 Program to strengthen HC and NGO roles as conservation advocates.
	1.4.3 Enhance the youth constituency program through innovative education programs for
	schools and other youth organizations.
	1.4.4. Establish community education centers
Output 2:	Information baseline established and strengthened as basis integrating conservation
	into productive sectors
Activity 2.1	Conduct biodiversity and socio-economic surveys and targeted research to support
	proactive management.
Activity 2.2	Design and establish participatory monitoring and management protocols for data
	gathering, and analysis and management.
Activity 2.3	Conduct training to enable government and local herders and other stakeholders to
T 1' /	incorporate basic biodiversity conservation information into their productive sector work.
Immediate	To strengthen "traditional" protected area-based approaches by expanding their scope to
Objective 2	I and some based approach to concernation established and approximational
Activity 3.1	MEA a NGO and protected area stakeholders construct landscape level biodiversity
Activity 5.1	conservation plans for Altai Arc and Savan Basin
Activity 3.2	Devise and Implement Conservation and Recovery Plans for priority landscape species
Activity 5.2	and ecosystems
Activity 3 3	Strengthen priority protected areas' ability to apply landscape principles to conservation
	action
Activity 3.4	Herder communities designate priority habitat areas in the landscape around each priority
,	PA and develop local priority habitat conservation plans.
Activity 3.5	Building upon Activity 3.4, local HC will develop simple and practical participatory
	management agreements for each priority landscape area.
Activity 3.6	Strengthen priority PA infrastructure and staff capacity.
Output 4:	Strengthened trans-boundary conservation action and institutional linkages
Activity 4.1	Establish regional coordination committee for trans-boundary cooperation.
Activity 4.2	Elucidate trans-boundary conservation agreements for landscape conservation and
	regional planning objectives.
Activity 4.3	Regional Conservation & Sustainable Development Conference.
Immediate	To successfully demonstrate how to integrate biodiversity into resource management and
Objective 3:	economic development practice & Policy

(compiled from the Project Brief 2004 narrative description):

Output 5:	Grazing, forest-use, sport hunting management, and tourism, are re-oriented to support concervation while improving livelihoods
Activity 5.1	<ul> <li>Support conservation while improving ivenhous.</li> <li>Demonstrate community-based pasture management and livelihood improvement.</li> <li>5.1.1 Strengthen existing customary forms of cooperation among herders through HCs.</li> <li>Delineate and map the boundaries of their customary seasonal grazing areas and key point resources (e.g. wells, salt licks), and secure formal recognition of this delineation from <i>soum</i> and <i>bag</i> leaders;</li> <li>Forge co-management agreements between each HC and their respective <i>aimag</i> and <i>soum</i> officials for each customary grazing area, clearly defining tenure rules allowing for flexibility and reciprocity of pasture use with other herder associations in times of need.</li> <li>Enable HC to improve productivity of their livestock by accessing knowledge, technology, and financing currently unavailable to them. For example: improved livestock quality by better breeding; marketing advice; micro-credit, contingent financing, and veterinary assistance.</li> <li>Allocate and manage water points and permanent structure areas to minimize land degradation and erosion, and/or unreasonable pressure by domestic animals on priority wildlife habitat.</li> <li>Develop simply system for herder communities to monitor current condition and trend in seasonal pastures to support adaptive grazing management, protection and the other is the second particular of the second particular degradation and permanent structure areas to minimize land degradation and erosion, and/or unreasonable pressure by domestic animals on priority wildlife habitat.</li> </ul>
Activity 5.2	5.1.2 Improve livelihood opportunities for herder communities Pilot areas are established for community-managed hunting program
Activity 5.2	Sustainable forest management practices are demonstrated
Activity 5.4	Cultivate the emergence of apex institution for learning among community groups in the Altai-Sayan.
Activity 5.5	Enhance and re-orient existing revenue generation mechanisms for sustainable financing of conservation programs.
Immediate	To implement a project that learns from it's successes and failures and shares these
Objective 4:	lessons and replicates best practices effectively among it's own stakeholders and with others.
Output 6:	Monitoring and evaluation is applied as tool for adaptive management, assessment of project impact/progress, and replication of best practices.
Activity 6.1	Monitor and evaluate project activities and outputs on an annual basis.
Activity 6.2	Sharing lessons learned and replication of best practices.
Activity 6 3	Adaptive Management Training

# Annex 4c. Project Brief (2004) Annex ii: Logical Framework Matrix

Objectives	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions/Risks
<b>Overall Objective:</b> C	Conservation and sustainable use of globally significant mountain biological diversity in Mongolia's	Altai Sayan Ecoregion.	
Overall Objective: C Purpose The successful completion of the project will result in stakeholders devising innovative and adaptive practices to mitigate and prevent threats to biological diversity by applying new partnerships, conservation tools, information, and sustainable livelihoods to conserve biological diversity.	<ul> <li>Sonservation and sustainable use of globally significant mountain biological diversity in Mongolia's Beginning year 4, stabilization and/or reduction in levels of threat to landscape biodiversity in priority habitat areas and in priority protected areas compared to project start levels. Condition of grassland in each pilot area maintained or improved over starting baseline at project closure through measurement of presence/absence of indicator species for grassland health by end of year 5.</li> <li>Numbers and distribution of landscape species [argali, snow leopard, taimen] is same or increased within priority areas by project closure (year 5) through measurement of presence/absence and/or numbers/location/condition.</li> <li>Similar condition or measurable improvement in forest, and riparian quality in pilot areas by end of project.</li> <li>Milestone: 50% of the pilot area herders have adopted at least one project-promoted sustainable practice by MTE; 50% by project closure.</li> <li>Milestone: Transboundary surveys and conservation action underway between Mongolian and Russian counterparts by MTE.</li> <li>Milestone: at least three project partners mainstreaming biodiversity objectives into their productive sector programs policies and practice by middle of Year 3 and three more partners by end of Year 4; progress satisfactory by MTE and reasonably complete by project closure.</li> <li>Milestone: 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> brought under improved management by MTE and 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> by project closure.</li> </ul>	Altai Sayan Ecoregion. Threats analysis from field interviews/ most appropriate wildlife survey techniques. Field surveys. Biannual biological surveys. Visual sightings, scat/track surveys, other methods as appropriate. Environmental monitoring studies and sampling surveys. Field Surveys; Interviews; project records. Agreement documentation/ Interviews; Forestry and agricultural policy and practice field review and interviews; Expert evaluator opinion. Formal agreement between local communities and MNE; expert conclusion after field visit. Field and mapping assessments:	GoM remains committed to environmental protection, and sustainable development programs No significant increase in environmental/climate disruptions (global warming, wildfires) Priority sites will be sufficient to maintain connectivity. GoM continues/increases support of NGO involvement and democratic processes in conservation work In practice, local people are willing to change grazing, forest-use practices.
	ciosure.	expert evaluator opinion/conclusion.	
Output 1:	Sustainable development commissions successfully complete Land-use Plan for Bayan Olgii and	1: Land-use plans, reports and	Continuity in local
Conservation Capacity of	Eive herder communities (HC) operational by end of year 2.	2 Interviews: project progress	adaptive learning
Productive Sector	Biodiversity conservation objectives integrated into grazing and land-use policies by end of year	reports	Government institutions
Institutions and	3.	3. Revised policy documents.	open to awareness-raising
Policies Is	<b>CB Indicator:</b> MNE and MoA roles clearly defined and understood in promoting biodiversity	3: Project progress reports, and	Institutional ambivalence to
Strengthened.	conservation in productive landscape by end of year 2.	campaign plans	cross- sector collaboration
-	CB Indicator: Aimag, soum and border officials knowledge of environmental policy	4. Policy documents; project	can be overcome
	enforcement requirements will be improved by 50% over pre-training knowledge levels.	progress reports.	Education institutions will
	CB Indicators: Economic valuation studies of key biodiversity and ecosystem assets will	5. Pre and post-training	collaborate with awareness

Objectives	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions/Risks
	influence the public policy debate by end of year 4. Level of environmental awareness in children, Government officials and the general public meets campaign goals by years five and eight.	assessments. Published results of studies; newspaper clippings; interviews with stakeholders. Pre and post-awareness program surveys.	activities Institutions willing to carry out policy and regulatory reform
Output 2: Information baseline established and strengthened as basis for integrating conservation into productive sectors.	Baseline biological and socioeconomic assessments completed and in pilot areas by year 2; At least presence of priority species and if possible numbers and condition confirmed in pilot areas. Standardized protocols for monitoring of biodiversity and threat levels developed and accepted by end of year one; participatory monitoring in place by end of year 2. Herder resource use patterns in relation to important wildlife habitat understood and mapped for management and herder use, by year 3. <b>CB Indicator:</b> Key staff improve their capacity to manage, access and apply information measurably over pre-training level of knowledge.	<ol> <li>Project progress reports; assessments and plans; Survey reports; data sheets.</li> <li>Protocols; field interviews; monitoring records.</li> <li>Database records; Map documents; interviews</li> <li>Before/After training knowledge assessments.</li> </ol>	Community and other stakeholder conflicts can be resolved Minimum infrastructure exists to support local information management Local communities will share information regarding resource practices, economics, etc.
Output 3: Landscape-based approach to conservation established and operational	Landscape-level conservation plans completed by end of year 2, updated by year five; Priority species recovery/conservation plans developed and under implementation by end of year 2. <b>CB Indicator:</b> Protected area staffs' knowledge of basic tenets of landscape ecology measurably improved over baseline knowledge levels. Protected areas develop and apply maps of priority species priority habitats across the landscape as part of their conservation program for each protected area by end of year 3. HC designate at least six (6) priority habitats in productive landscape and implement basic conservation action by end of year 3. Priority protected area management "re-oriented" to landscape perspective with broad stakeholder consensus and participation by year 3. <b>Milestone:</b> MNE to meet recurrent management costs of priority protected areas. <b>Milestone:</b> MNE/Protected Areas' link to herder communities established and strengthened. <b>Milestone and CB Indicator:</b> Reputation of protected areas among stakeholders changes measurably for the better, starting with MNE and improving through to project closure.	Conservation plans and mapping documents; Planning documents. Before/After training knowledge assessments Maps; field interviews of PA staff. Participatory management agreements; Project records; HC maps; Field interviews. Formal agreement prior to MTE and funding by end of year 4. MNE-Herder Community partnership clarified through written agreement prior to MTE. Survey in year 1, year 3 and year 5.	Political and economic will exists to "internalize" environmental costs. Local communities will have incentives to support protected areas Local populations are receptive to policy and regulatory prescriptions
Output 4: Strengthened Trans- boundary Conservation Action and Institutional	<ul> <li>Milestone: Transboundary Conservation Agreements reached on at least two priority landscape species by end of year 3. Trans-boundary agreements on protected area data sharing and management cooperation by end of year 2.</li> <li>Milestone: Transboundary field-level cooperation in conservation by MTE.</li> <li>Protected areas begin sharing data/lessons learned by end of year 4.</li> </ul>	<ol> <li>Signed agreements.</li> <li>Expert evaluator opinion based upon field visits/interviews.</li> <li>Interviews in the field w/protected areas staff.</li> </ol>	Political situation between Russia & Mongolia will continue to encourage trans-boundary cooperation.

Objectives	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions/Risks
Linkages			
Output 5. Grazing, forest-use, sport hunting management, and tourism, are re- oriented to support conservation while improving livelihoods.	<b>CB Indicator:</b> 30% percent of the herder population in the pilot areas have adopted project- promoted sustainable grazing practices by end of year 4; 65% by end of year 5. Pasturelands in pilot areas show measurably significant signs of improvement at the end of year 5. <b>CB Indicator:</b> Feasibility of community-based wildlife management demonstrated, and instruments designed and approved by MNE and MFAG by end of year 2, and implemented by end of year 3. <b>CB Indicator:</b> Community-MNE forest management partnerships established and operational by end of year 2; forest management practices on a sustainable footing by end of year 5. <b>CB Indicator:</b> One community learning center established by stakeholders in year 2; Center expands capacity, serving significant numbers of herders and resulting in more efficient use of resources and improved livelihood practices by the end of year 4. Second community learning center established by end of year 5.	Community agreements, field interviews. Project field records, and progress reports; Field interviews. Partnership agreements; Field interviews. Learning center visits; field interviews; reports. Field visits; Interviews.	Local land tenure conflicts are resolvable Climatic conditions will not counteract pasture restoration/ sustainable grazing efforts.
Output 6. Monitoring and evaluation is applied as a tool for adaptive management, assessment of project impact/progress and replication of best practices.	Annual monitoring and evaluation exercises completed, demonstrating acceptable accomplishment of results measuring against milestones and indicators of capacity building. Key decision makers' understanding of adaptive management strengthened and measurably improved over baseline levels in two project site areas by end of year 2 and in remaining site areas by end of year 4. Use of project partners (at herder, bag, aimag, national Ministry, and multi-lateral/bi-lateral programs) to replicate the project's outcome in other regions of Mongolia. <b>Milestone:</b> Three or more cases of successful replicating and applying project's useful experience in other places among pastoralists, bag, soum, aimag and national Ministry officials by MTE. At least three more underway by end of project. Knowledge transfer and dissemination of lessons through: (a) the regional Altai Sayan forum; (b) presentations of lessons and best practices at the project's regional conference on Altai Sayan; (c) project results document. <b>Milestone:</b> At least 20 individuals from project partners in MFAg, MNE, IFAD and ADB programs involved in project's lessons learned round-table, training workshops to capture lessons learned and replicate them by the MTE and 20 more by close of project.	Monitoring and evaluation reports; technical progress reports. Before/After training knowledge assessments. Assessment of who is replicating – which institutions/individuals. Project evaluations and progress reports; Field visits. Proceedings from the regional conference. Training and workshop records; expert evaluator, field interviews.	

# Annex 4d. Draft Revised Project Logical Framework, December 2007

Objective	To apply new community and gove biodiversity of the Altai Sayan eco	ernment partnerships and practices, inform -region	nation and sustainable livelihoods to	achieve conservation of the mountain
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Assumptions
Scores of protected areas in the Altai Sayan Region on WWF RAPPAM Management Effectiveness Assessment	To be determined early 2008	Increased scores for all protected areas by the end of the project	RAPPAM scores from standard workshops	Mountain biodiversity conservation remains a priority of the Mongolian Government.
Level of funding for protected areas	As in WWF/MNE 2007 Capacity and Financial Need Assessment of Protected Areas located in the Altai Sayan Region of Mongolia.	Significant increases by 2010	Repeat of workshops held to prepare the 2007 Assessment Report	National funds are available for routine activities during the project, and for later recurrent costs (eg for surveys, monitoring, consultations, visits, equipment maintenance, database services, public information displays, outreach programmes and newsletter publication). Government willing to assign highly qualified staff to work with the project.
Percentage of argali, ibex and snow leopard habitat under effective protection	To be determined early 2008 (including definition of effective protection)	Increase annually. Note that effective protection is not limited to formal state run protected areas but includes novel forms of protection established under the project if effective	Project records and independent audit	
Numbers of domestic livestock in the Altai Sayan Eco-region	To be determined spring 2008	Overall reduction by >10%	Project census records, herder records, government records	The project willing to recruit highly qualified technical assistance when required.
Numbers of domestic goats in the Altai Sayan Eco-region	To be determined spring 2008	Overall reduction by >15%	Project census records, herder records, government records	UNDP and MNE willing to work together smoothly to solve problems and to think beyond narrowly defined
Rangeland health index in protected areas	To be determined summer 2008	Overall increase by >15% by the end of the project	Monitoring records	institutional targets
Rangeland health index outside protected areas	To be determined summer 2008	Overall increase by >10% by the end of the project	Monitoring records	
Forest health index in Altai Sayan Eco-region	To be determined summer 2008	Significant increase by 2011	Monitoring records	
Overall use of new timber for construction of buildings and enclosures in the Altai Sayan Eco-region	To be determined for 2008	Significant annual decreases, and zero illegal use	Project records, Protected Area records, <i>Aimag</i> , <i>sum</i> and <i>bag</i> government records	
Wild animal species diversity index in Altai Sayan Eco-region (combined measure of number of species and frequency of occurrence)	To be determined early 2008	Increase in index on standard routes	Monitoring records	
Representativeness of altitudinal zones in protected area system	To be determined 2008	Balanced representation of altitudinal zones in the protected area system	Protected Area Administration records	
Number of protected areas in which there are routine, uncontrolled infractions of protected area regulations	To be determined early 2008 retrospectively for 2007	Reduction to zero by the end of the project	Project records, Protected area ranger records	

Numbers of proposed or actual interventions in mountain biodiversity conservation in the Altai Sayan region that are not based on sound evidence	MANY EXAMPLES	REDUCE ANNUALLY	Project records
Number of herders in the Altai Sayan Ecoregion who have changed their annual	Measure change from January 2008	Annual increases from 2009	Project records, <i>sum</i> records, Herder records-
movement patterns to accommodate biodiversity conservation considerations			

Outcome 1	Biodiversity conservation is a routine consideration in productive sector institutions, policies and practices			
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Assumptions
<b>Either</b> ACSDs institutionalized as part of government with salaries and running costs provided by government, <b>or</b> all functions of ACSD taken on by the main executive arms of government, with biodiversity and hydrology expertise included and funded	Not institutionalized	Salaries and running costs paid by government (Bayan Olgii) Functions incorporated into government (Khovsgol)	Aimag government reports	Government authorities and commercial and not for profit organizations have the necessary will to review and change fundamental policy, development plans, and management approaches in response to mountain biodiversity conservation considerations
Score (against concise criteria on consideration of biodiversity) of (a) <i>aimag</i> land use plans, and (b) long term development plans	Score to be determined against current plans in January 2008	Increase each year	Aimag land use plans, and long term development plans	
Percentage of <i>sums</i> in project area with land use plans that are in 80% conformity with the criteria	Score to be determined against current plans in January 2008	80% by end of project	Sum land use plans	
Number of legal economic development decisions per year that do not satisfy the criteria	To be determined retrospectively for 2007 in January 2008	Decrease each year to zero by 2011	Aimag and sum khural records Newspaper reports	
Number of violations of government policy on biodiversity and the environment in economic development decision making	To be determined retrospectively for 2007 in January 2008	Decrease each year to zero by 2011	Aimag and sum khural records Newspaper reports	
Level of consultation between MNE and MFAg on biodiversity conservation	To be determined retrospectively for 2007 in January 2008, to include numbers of meetings as part of established committees and additional meetings between the two ministries	Increase each year to 2011	Ministry records and meeting minutes	
Percentage of agricultural extension workers who have incorporated biodiversity conservation considerations into their guidance to the public	To be established by interview of sample in January 2008	Increase each year to 80% by 2011	Interviews of agricultural extension workers	

Number of perverse (in biodiversity conservation terms) incentives such as prizes that reward herders for keeping large numbers of livestock	To be determined retrospectively for 2007 by January 2008	Decrease to zero by 2009	Project records
Amount of money returned under existing legislation as return of revenue from hunting and tourism to conservation in the field	To be determined for 2007 in January 2008	Annual increase to the maximum under current legislation by 2011	Protected Area, MNE, <i>sum</i> and <i>aimag</i> government records
New legislation passed that mandates increased funding for biodiversity conservation	None	New law passed by 2011	Government records
Recommendations from the policy review will provide effective incentives to reduce the number of livestock	None	At least one relevant to each sector	Project records

Outcome 2	Accurate and reliable information on biodiversity and ecological processes published, shared and incorporated into decision making by government, developers, herder groups and individual members of the public			
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Assumptions
Number of "hits" per month on the Altai Sayan Database/Search Engine website that brings together all the data collated or collected under the project	To be determined during the first six months of operation	Increase on annual basis throughout the project	Website records	Research and data collection is done according to sound sampling protocols
Number of messages to the Altai Sayan Database/Search Engine website manager re biodiversity conservation	To be determined during the first six months of operation	Increase on annual basis throughout the project	Website records	
Number of examples per year of government decisions with influence on biodiversity informed by data collated or collected under the project	To be determined during 2008	Increase to end of project	Aimag and sum khural records	
Number of examples of data collated or collected by the project being used in Environmental Assessments (EA) and implementation of EA decisions	To be determined during 2008	Annual increases	Aimag and sum khural records	
Number of government departments that are active members of the Altai Sayan database/Search Engine website - privileged with password	To be determined during the first six months of operation	Increase annually	Website records	
Number of protected area visitor centres using data contributed by people, herder groups or local economic entities	Measure in January 2008	Annual increases	Original reports from the public Protected Area records	
Number of adjustments made to herder local area management plans as a result of data collected under locally run monitoring schemes	Numbers of adjustments to each plan determined in the year following completion	Each plan revised annually in response to monitoring data	Herder group records	

Number of examples of NGOs, Herder Groups or individual members of the public using data collated or collected under the project for advocacy, or for holding government to account on environmental governance	Measure from January 2008	Annual increase	Project reports Herder Group Records	
Number of examples of changes in approaches adopted by development aid organizations with respect to biodiversity considerations in alternative livelihood and poverty reduction programmes	N/A	Clear acknowledgement in policy statements that simply increasing incomes does not in itself constitute a biodiversity conservation measure	NGO, other donor reports, proposals and policy statements	
Score on poll questionnaire/interview to asses public opinion and knowledge about mountain biodiversity conservation in the context of rural livelihoods and economic development and livelihoods	First poll to be carried out in March 2008	Increasing scores	Professional opinon pollster's report	
Score on poll questionnaire/interview to asses opinion and knowledge of government officials regarding mountain biodiversity conservation in the context of rural livelihoods and economic development and livelihoods	First poll to be carried out in March 2008	Increasing scores	Professional opinon pollster's report	
Incorporation of basic biodiversity components (checklist to be prepared immediately) into national school curriculum through collaboration with other donor projects	To be determined February 2008	80% of components incorporated	The curriculum	
Number of regular (monthly or quarterly) series of talks/discussion evenings on biodiversity established in <i>aimag</i> centres	Zero	One <i>aimag</i> by June 2008, two by end 2008, four by the end of the project	Project reports	
Sales of books on wildlife and biodiversity and the impacts of economic development and livestock husbandry in selected shops, including Protected Area Administration outlets.	To be determined for 2007 by survey	Annual increases	Sales records	
Number of Protected Area Visitor centres incorporating changes in approaches with respect to information and ideas on biodiversity conservation and livelihoods	N/A	All show an evidence based approach to conservation by the end of the project, and link wildlife with ecological services and livelihoods in their information programmes	Inspection of visitor centres Project records	
Attendance at Olgii and Renchinlhumbe (or Khatgal) environmental education/apex learning centres	N/A	Annual increases (once fees are charged for attendance, annual increases in income)	Centre records	

Readership/circulation of project newspaper	N/A	Annual increases	Newspaper records	
		(once papers are sold rather than given		
		away, annual increases in income)		

Outcome 3	Conservation management expanded from the protected area level to the landscape level			
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Assumptions
Percentage of <i>sum/aimag</i> /national governments and specialized agencies carrying out (OR NOT) their obligations under a) the (2008 - 09) Landscape Planning Process and b) (2009 - 11) the Landscape Plan Implementation	N/A	Annual increases, to 80% by 2011	Project records Government records	Genuine involvement of herder groups and all relevant government agencies in efforts to collaborate, build capacities and change processes that outlast the project. Joint work planning for expenditure of government and donor funds so as to complement each other well and not to
Percentage of NGOs carrying out (OR NOT) their obligations under a) the (2008 - 09) Landscape Planning Process and b) (2009 - 11) the Landscape Plan Implementation	N/A	Annual increases, to 80% by 2011	Project records Government records	cause any delays or conflicting actions. Necessary cooperation between different <i>aimag</i> and <i>sum</i> governments is achieved on time. Maps and other information required for project implementation are obtained on
Percentage of Herder Groups carrying out (OR NOT) their obligations under a) the (2008 - 09) Landscape Planning Process and b) (2009 - 11) the Landscape Plan Implementation	N/A	Annual increases, to 80% by 2011	Project records Government records	time
Percentage of Protected Area Administrations carrying out (OR NOT) their obligations under a) the (2008 - 09) Landscape Planning Process and b) (2009 - 11) the Landscape Plan Implementation	N/A	Annual increases, to 80% by 2011	Project records Government records	
Percentage of actions under each Species Conservation Plan completed on time	N/A	80%	Project records	
Percentage of parties which have accepted responsibilities under Species Conservation Plans that fail to carry out their obligations	N/A	ANNUAL DECREASES	Project records	

INCORPORATION OF MOUNTAIN	N/A	80% of components incorporated	The curriculum	
BIODIVERSITY COMPONENTS (CHECKLIST TO				
BE PREPARED IMMEDIATELY) INTO				
PROTECTED AREA ADMINISTRATION				
CENTRAL TRAINING CURRICULUM THROUGH				
COLLABORATION WITH GTZ, WWF AND				
OTHER DONORS				
INCORPORATION OF MOUNTAIN	N/A	80% of components incorporated	The curriculum	
BIODIVERSITY COMPONENTS (CHECKLIST TO				
BE PREPARED IMMEDIATELY) INTO BORDER				
PATROL CENTRAL TRAINING CURRICULUM				
Numbers of proposed or actual interventions	MANY EXAMPLES	<b>REDUCE ANNUALLY AND TO ZERO BY</b>	Project records	
in mountain biodiversity conservation in the		2011		
project areas that are not based on sound				
evidence and that are not in either the				
Landscape or the Species Conservation Plans				
Number of examples per year of salt and food	TO BE DETERMINED FOR 2007	DECREASE TO ZERO BY END OF 2008	Project records, herder	
provisioning programmes for wild species in			interviews, and local	
the name of biodiversity conservation			government records	

Outcome 4	Joint transboundary conservation action and exchange of information on biodiversity conservation is routine			
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Assumptions
Number of joint actions with Russia, China and Kazakhstan on transboundary Biodiversity Conservation, including research activities	To be determined retrospectively for 2007 in January 2008	Annual increases	Project records	Necessary cooperation with Russian, Kazakhstan and Chinese agencies is achieved on time
Number of examples of information exchanged with local and national governments of Russia, Kazakhstan and China regarding the implications for biodiversity conservation of economic development or infrastructure development near the international borders	To be determined retrospectively for 2007 in January 2008	Annual increases	Project records	
Number of biodiversity conservation civil society organizations in Russia, Kazakhstan and China with which the project has formed lasting links	To be determined retrospectively for 2007 in January 2008	Annual increases	Project records	
Number of new protected areas or extensions to existing protected areas contiguous with protected areas on the other side of the boundary.	N.A	Annual increases to 2010	Project records	

Number of decisions on land use or protected	To be determined retrospectively	Annual increases	Project records	
area management modified in the light of	for 2007 in January 2008			
information on biodiversity exchanged with				
Russia, Kazakhstan or China.				

Outcome 5	Policies and practices related to livelihoods and economic development based on grassland, forest and mountain resources take into account the need to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem processes			
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Assumptions
Rangeland health index in project areas under	To be determined <i>sum</i> mer 2008	Overall increase by $>15\%$ by the end of the project	Monitoring records	The project works with herders at their
Dengeland health index in naighbouring	To be determined summer 2008	$\frac{1}{2}$ Overall increases by >20% by the end of	Monitoring records	to sustain the changes being introduced
Rangeland health index in heighbournig	10 be determined summer 2008	the project	Womtoring records	to sustain the changes being introduced.
Conservation Agreements with pilot groups		the project		
Number of herders in project areas who have	Measure change from January	Annual increases	Project records sum records	-
changed their annual movement patterns to	2008	Annual mercases	Herder records	
accommodate biodiversity conservation	2000		Tierder Teeords-	
considerations				
Forest health index in project areas under	To be determined <i>sum</i> mer 2008	Overall increase by $>15\%$ by 2011	Monitoring records	
herder group management				
Number of new wooden enclosures built in	Measure from January 2008	Annual decreases to zero by 2010	Protected area records.	
protected areas in project areas				
Number of new wooden houses and	Measure from January 2008	Annual decreases	Project and sum government	1
enclosures built in sum centres where the			records	
project has staff based				
Wild animal species diversity index in project	To be determined early 2008	Increase in index on standard routes	Monitoring records	
areas (combined measure of number of				
species and frequency of occurrence)				
Score of approved herder group pasture and	N/A	80% by end of project	Herder Group pasture and	
forest management plans against biodiversity			forest management plans	
conservation criteria				-
Overall adherence of herder groups in project	N/A	Defaults reduced in all three annually to	Project records	
areas to		2011	Protected Area	
(a) management plans,			Administration Records	
(b) Community Conservation Agreements			Local Government Records	
with Protected Area Administrations and			Herder Group records	
(c) Co-management Agreements with local				
governments Decentage of diversified livelihoods that are	To be determined in January 2009	Annual increases	Draigat ragarda	4
based on the principle that higher principle he	10 be determined in January 2008	Annual mereases	rioject lecolus	
paid for higher quality products				
paid for higher quanty products				

Percentage of diversified livelihoods	To be determined in January 2008	Annual increases	Project records	
demonstrated to have overall positive impact				
both on mountain biodiversity conservation				
and on incomes				

Outcome 6	Project monitored well, lessons evaluated and failures and successes publicized so that others can benefit from the project's experience.			
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Assumptions
Percentage of project activities (as defined in annual work plans) for which useful (for dissemination) <i>sum</i> maries and analyses of performance are produced	Assess retrospectively for 2007 by January 2008	Annual increases to 90% by 2011	Expert assessment	Reporting is prompt and accurate and well organized Feedback from relevant organizations is
Percentage of partners in each project area with good knowledge of project activities in the other project areas	To be determined spring 2008	Annual increases to 80% by 2011	Simple surveys done by project	also prompt
Number of examples per year of project results used elsewhere	To be determined retrospectively for 2007 by January 2008	Annual increases	Project records	
Percentage of failed approaches publicized so that others may learn from the project's mistakes	Start from January 2008	Annual increases to 100% by end of the project	Project records	
Score on assessment of project website by independent expert	Score in December 2007	Reach 95% by July 2008	Expert assessment of the website	

# **ANNEX 5.** Initial List of Relevant Agencies and Projects Active in the Altai Sayan Region

Adventist Development and Relief Agency	The Micro Economic Development (MED) Program
Association pour le cheval de Przewalski	Khomintal re-introduction Project
German Development Service	Development of renewable energy resources
(DED) or GTZ	Conservation and sustainable management of natural resources
	Establishment of fiscal cadastre/land management in Mongolia
International Development Research Centre, Canada	<ul> <li>Sustainable Management of Common Natural Resources of Mongolia III phase closed</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Collaborative Learning for Co-management of Natural Resources in Mongolia</li> </ul>
	Using Evaluation for CBNRM Capacity Development (Southeast Asia)
Itgel Foundation	
Mercy Corps International & O	• With funding from USAID, Mercy Corps' Training, Advocacy and Networking project (TAN)
	Gobi Initiative and Rural Agribusiness Support Program
New Zealand Nature Institute	Initiative for People Centred Conservation (IPECON)
Soros Foundation	•
Swiss Agency for Development	Coping with Desertification Project
and Cooperation	"Support to Artisanal Mining in Mongolia" (SAM),
•	"Ger to Ger' - Nomad Centered tourism project
·	Sustainable livestock management project
	"Green gold" Pasture ecosystem management program
The Asia Foundation	(particularly in relation to water quality monitoring)
·	Mongolian Nature Protection Coalition (MNPC)
	<ul> <li>Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry. For a conference entitled, "Mongolian Nature and Ecology Challenges: Ways to Overcome Them," aimed at promoting more responsible resource use.</li> </ul>
UNDP	Local Government Support Programme Project
	<ul> <li>Strengthening the Disaster Mitigation and management system in Mongolia phase III,</li> </ul>
	Enterprise Mongolia, SME promotion program 2005-2008
UNDP – Dutch Government	Sustainable Land Management Project
	Environmental Governance project
UNDP – GEF	Small Grants Program Mongolia
UNEP – ? Mongolian Institute	Mongolian fauna surveys
US Peace Corps	Small Business Development
Wildlife Conservation Society	Eastern Steppe Living Landscapes Program
	Wildlife Conservation Research
	Wildlife Conservation Policy
World Bank	Sustainable Livelihoods Project
	Netherlands-Mongolia TF for Environmental Reform (RE) MNE
	Sustainable Livelihoods Project II

World Vision	•	Increasing herders level hood project
WWF World Wide Fund for Nature		Sustainable Water Management as a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in Western Mongolia
	•	Sustainable Development of Protected Areas in the Altai-Sayan Eco- region
	•	Reducing Illegal Trade of Wildlife Products
	•	Land of Snow Leopard
	•	Species Conservation in Mongolia
Asian Development Bank	•	Community-based local road upgrading and maintenance in western region of Mongolia

# ANNEX 6. Presentation of Altai Sayan Project Research Studies, 2004-2006

The following presentation consists of brief descriptions of biodiversity research undertaken by specialists on behalf of the Altai-Sayan project in the period 2004-2006. It covers several prominent species that are important components of the regional biodiversity in the Altai and Sayan Mountains of Mongolia, together with a few studies on ecological issues and conservation threats. These summary notes were prepared from the reports contained in the Project's printed publication and from the PowerPoint presentation made available on CD.

The majority of these presentations are descriptive, providing a great deal of natural history background on the species of concern, but very little information on research findings and quantitative data.

# A. Presentations in the Printed Book

### **Description of the Alatai-Sayan ecoregion.**

Dr. D. Dash Geo-Ecology Institute Basic description of the region with lists of rare species and their conservation listing.

### Protected plants in the Altai-Sayan ecoregion.

Sc.D Y. Beket, More specifics on the numbers and species of plants in the region that have protected status.

### Mammals of the Altai-Sayan ecoregion.

Dr. S. Shar, National University of Mongolia Mammals in the Altai-Sayan and their protection status

### Rare plants and mammals of Bayan Olgii

Y. Beket, Brief descriptions of rare plants and mammals in Bayan Olgii.

Uvs biodiversity briefing.

### Hovsgol biodiversity briefing.

### Xovd biodiversity briefing.

### Forest coverage in the Altai Sayan Project region.

G. Tsedendash, Academy of Science, Institute of Botany This is a general description of forest coverage and the laws associated with forestry.

### Snow leopard population status and conservation efforts in the Altai Sayan region.

B. Monktsog, L. Purevjav, C. Purevsuren, D. Davharbayar, B. Buyantsog Mongolian 'Irbis' (Snow Leopard) conservation center & other institutes. This provides a brief description of snow leopard range in Mongolia and food consumption in two regions in its range in Mongolia (one is outside the project area) and a description of its conservation activities through the NGO IRBIS Enterprises.

(Note that data on the amount of livestock lost to Snow Leopards in the project range is needed in order to demonstrate problem areas where the project could focus its efforts.)

### Argali and pasture use by livestock in Uvs Aimag.

S. Amglanbaatar, O. Shagdasuren, R. Reading, E. Onon

Academy of Science, Denver Zoo & WWF

This paper describes the location of winter and summer grazing camps in 5 soums in Uvs. There is a figure for each soum describing the range of Argali and the location of summer grazing camps. The text lists the exact numbers of camps in each soum.

### Movements of radio collared argali in Uvs Aimag.

S. Amglanbaatar, O. Shagdasuren, R. Reading, E. Onon

Academy of Science, Denver Zoo & WWF

This paper reports on a MCP and Kernal home range analysis of what appears to be 6 radio collared Argali captured in the same spot. These 6 argali had 95% kernal home range sizes of between 146 and 191 square kilometers. This is the only analysis provided.

### Red deer (Cervus elaphus) survey results of Bayan Olgii Aimag.

Dr. Tsendjav, D. Davabayar Academy of Science, Institute of Biology; Altai-Sayan Biodiversity Conservation Project Bayan Olgii office

This paper reports on Argali counts in 5 soums (Sagsai, Bulgan, Altai, Tsengal, Deluun). There is a table showing the numbers counted in specific regions within the soums with the coordinates of those regions. There were a reported 324 red deer (72M, 173F,79C).

### Musk deer (Moschus moschiferus) surveys in 2 protected areas of Uvs aimag.

D. Tsendjav, Ts. Tsogolvoo

Academy of Science, Institute of Biology; Mongolian society for musk deer conservation The survey took place in August/September. A total of 4 musk deer (1M, 2F, 1C) were counted in 2 regions of Ikh Husurlug and Bag Husurlug in Tsaagan Shuvuut PA and none counted in Khankhokhii Uul PA. The authors also provide counts of musk deer beds and fecal piles.

### Natural history of Grey wolves (Canis lupus) in the Altai Sayan region.

P. Amgalan

Academy of Science, Institute of Biology

This paper provides a short summary of past population estimates and numbers of wolves hunted in various regions.

### Report on Comorant (Phalacrocorax Carbo) research in Hovsgol.

N. Tseveenmyadag

Academy of Science, Institute of Biology

This report describes observations of comings and goings of cormorants observed at various locations in the Darkhad Valley between September 30 and October 10 2006. There is a table describing estimated population sizes of 6 colonies of cormorants in the region (Total

population 6,216, including one colony with 5,051 individuals). It is estimated that a cormorant eats between 400 and 800 grams of fish/day, but there did not appear to be any data to confirm this. A very coarse scale map is provided showing locations of where cormorants have been observed in the Darhad Valley.

(Note that further research would be needed to answer critical conservation questions. In particular this study does not provide multi-year observations of colony sizes so that further surveys are required to determine if the colony of cormorants is growing, stable, or declining. There are no data presented on what prey species cormorants are focusing on, if at all. There appears to be no systematically collected data on how much a cormorant needs to eat both within and outside of the nesting period, although these data are also widely available on the same species in other parts of the world and there is no reason to think these cormorants should behave much differently.)

### Grasshopper (Eclipophleps tarbinskii) outbreaks in the Altai Mountains.

D. Naasanbulat, B. Enkhjargal Agricultural University This was a one page summary about grasshoppers in the regions.

### Reptiles of the Altai-Sayan region.

X. Terbish National University of Mongolia This is a two page summary of the life history of 1 toad (*Bufo danatensis*), 1 lizard (*Lacerta agilis*), and 1 snake (*Vipera berus*).

### Summary of research on the ecology of lakes in Bayan Olgii conducted in 1999.

A. Dulmaa Academy of Science This summarized food types found in the lakes. It also provided an age structure of fish (*Thymallus brevirostrus*, *Oreoleuciscus potanini*) netted in these lakes.

### Phytoplankton and zooplankton in the Altai Sayan region and fish that depend on them.

A. Dulmaa Academy of Science

### Pasture biomass in Bayan Olgii, Uvs, Hovsgol, and Khovd.

S. Shireev-Adiya, B. Tsenchunt Academy of Science, GIS Lab Pasture biomass was estimated in 2004 and 2005 for these aimags

# Educational outlets and resources available for conservation education in the Altai Sayan project region.

D. Dash, D. Suren, Academy of Science, Institute of Geoecology, National University of Mongolia This paper included a list of the various schools and the organizations that have supplied educational materials to them within the projects working area.

### **Threats to and conservation of Argali (Ovis ammon) in Western Mongolia**. B. Dorjgotov Ministry of Nature and Enironment

This paper provided a listing of Argali conservation measures, some population counts in various regions, and numbers of hunting permits given out over the years.

### **B.** Additional PowerPoint presentations that were not in the printed book.

### Argali (Ovis ammon) survey in the Khoridol-Saridag SPA.

This presentation provides a basic summary of the project area, the number and names of participants and the location of their survey efforts. The report summarizes the herd composition of 7 groups of argali and provides a total of 17 individuals observed (8M, 6F, 2 lambs). There are two figures showing a kernal home range and minimum convex polygon analysis that is supposed to represent range use of Argali in the park. It appears to be based on spot observations of argali and group numbers and is an incorrect use of these analytical methods. There is an additional figure showing observed locations of wolves, red deer and argali while the survey was conducted.

(Note: There does not appear to be any seasonal recordings of the location of Argali that would allow managers to better understand habitat use and movements. Further studies with observations from different seasons would potentially reveal if this group of 17 are all that is left in the SPA, or simply the ones observed during that particular survey effort. Surveys during the rut would be more appropriate for developing data on sex ratios. Surveys shortly after lambing would be needed to learn about lambing success and neonatal survival.

# Description of sizes and age of whitefish (*Coregonus lavaretus*, *C. peled*, and *C. autumnalis*), Taimen (*Hucho Taimen*), Lenok (*Brachymystax lenok*), and Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*) in various sampling points in the Darkhad region:

This presentation reported on a variety of size classes (estimated into age classes) of commercially important fish species in the region. These data that could be potentially usefully for future work to determine fish population dynamics. The report provides sample sizes, but does not break the samples down according to an age classification, which would have given an indication of whether the population is increasing or decreasing.

# ANNEX 7. Biodiversity Assessment and Monitoring

Biodiversity assessment is the first stage in management planning. Its purpose is to establish a baseline of biodiversity information - not just any biodiversity information but that information required by the management authority to set priorities and objectives and to make management decisions for the future. The assessment of the baseline information is normally included as an important component of management plans.

Biodiversity assessment involves measuring or surveying what exists in an eco-region (or protected area) and what is known about it. A typical programme of biodiversity surveys in the Altai and Sayan Mountains would aim to achieve the following:

### Aims of Biodiversity Surveys in the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion

- Biological description of the territory including species inventories and the quantification of habitats and natural resources;
- Maps showing locations of habitats, important species and resources;
- Assessment of the value (or significance) of biodiversity for a spectrum of different stakeholders (e.g. value of timber for construction, water for municipal and agricultural uses, pasture for livestock grazing, fish and game animal stocks that may be utilised commercially, and rare or endemic species that require conservation to meet host country obligations under the Biodiversity Convention);
- Account of the immediate threats to biodiversity and ecological pressures (such as the impact of fishing with fine gill nets on fish productivity, or of timber extraction on forest regeneration);
- Preliminary set of species action plans;
- Maps showing areas of importance for biodiversity to be used in future zoning and landscape-based conservation;
- Biological justification for recommending any additional protected areas;
- Set of indicator species for use in monitoring biodiversity and natural resources;
- > Database for managing the information.

Monitoring is performed by gathering data through repeated surveys or standardised measurements but it is also essential to determine the objectives of monitoring. We may define monitoring as "the collection and analysis of repeated observations or measurements to evaluate progress toward meeting a management objective". For example, the management objective might be the restoration of a woodland habitat; alternatively it might be compliance to a stated limit such as water quality, or the population size of a key species, or the amount of firewood collected from a buffer zone.

Thus, in monitoring biodiversity (or natural resources), we aim to determine whether the objectives of conservation are being met. We should not attempt to describe the general ecology of an area, nor should we attempt to measure biodiversity features that are merely of biological interest.

The Altai Sayan Project appears not to have understood the basis of monitoring of natural resources. None of the activities being undertaken by the herder groups constitute monitoring as such. The data that are collected, for example on group size of argali, are not sufficient for assessing the status or trends of the population. Consequently the project has been unable to establish a functional monitoring programme.

A simple example of monitoring would be to systematically count and classify all the Argali on a given mountain range once per year, then use the same methods each year, so that any change in the size or composition of the local Argali population can be monitored.

# **ANNEX 8. Levels of survey intensity**

Survey intensity is a compromise between the level of accuracy of survey result required and the effort required to achieve that level. In practise the method chosen depends on how the information will be used. Usually three types of survey are distinguished as illustrated in the table.

Туре	Use
Inventory survey / Casual observation	Contributes to the formation of species lists and distribution maps (i.e. to an outline <b>biodiversity assessment</b> ). It can also be used to provide information on conservation threats and to help formulate species action plans. This is the least demanding method but it nevertheless requires skilled training to ensure accurate identification of species.
Relative abundance	Techniques that measure rates of encounter or relative abundance along a transect (such as the Mackinnon's Lists technique) are useful for <b>monitoring</b> purposes. They can inform management whether a species is increasing or decreasing in abundance. In the case of indicator species, this enables management to assess whether important changes are occurring in the ecosystem, whether conservation actions are having the desired effect, or whether new actions are needed. They are reliable and relatively quick survey techniques to undertake but require intensive training before they can be used accurately and reliably.
Absolute abundance	Absolute measures of abundance are useful for key species that require <b>close scrutiny and management</b> . They may be utilised to measure the number of a critically endangered species or one that is an indicator of an important threat or recovery process. They often require elaborate techniques (such as photographic id databases or repeat counts over an extensive network of transects) and usually require highly trained personnel.

# **ANNEX 9. Resource-Use Surveys**

The following are examples of resource-use surveys that should be undertaken in the Altai Sayan Eco-Region.

:

- Hunting surveys. These should cover: types of hunter (commercial, sport, local, foreign), their target species, methods of hunting, annual offtake, access to markets, and prices for animals products. Surveys should be conducted where there are already signs of substantial threat, such as in the Khovsgol taiga. (See: Scharf & Enkhbold 2002). The project should also collate all data on trophy sizes (argali, ibex, Taimen). The ME was informed that the length of argali horns on trophy animals had declined markedly in the past 15 years.
- Fishing surveys. Given the complexity of fisheries management, the project will need to focus on a subset, possibly of only one species. This species (or these species) should be selected from the list of Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened species, e.g. Taimen (*Hucho taimen*), Lenok (*Brachymystax lenok*), Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*) and Pidschian (or Arctic whitefish, *Coregonus pidschian*) which can be found in rivers and lakes within (or entering) the Darkhad Depression (*Ocock et al* 2006a). In view of the work undertaken by the project already on Taimen, and the array of threats (poaching with gill nets, dynamite and grenades, sport-angling without catch-and-release), this species might make a suitable model. (Further information in *Ocock et al* 2006b).

The following information should be collected on Taimen:

- Presence absence data of Taimen in all rivers in the project region;
- Spawning locations of all rivers;
- Winter pool aggregation locations;
- Juvenile survival vs adult survival data;
- Listing of tour operators, their fishing locations, catch rates & statistics;
- Data on net-fishing capture (species, volume, date) and companies involved;
- Data on the number of households that fish for Taimen, and income derived.
- Forest surveys. The *sum* and *aimag* offices have data on the legal extraction of timber for construction, and gathering of firewood as part of forest 'cleaning' activities, but the project needs its own independent survey of wood removed (legally and illegally) and of the impact of forest cleaning on biodiversity. This survey work should be undertaken in a selected region of the Altai range where forests are under greater threat. Timber removed should be measured and firewood weighed to test the accuracy of official estimates. (In communities living around Little Gobi SPA, about twice as much wood was used as officially estimated (J. Jamsranjav *pers. com*).
- Livestock surveys. Data can be obtained from *sum* offices but ASP needs to check this information against its own independent survey. These surveys are relatively quick and easy to undertake.

• Mining license locations. These should be kept up-to-date on the GIS database together with information on applications for production.

# **ANNEX 10. Conservation Studies**

Conservation studies provide management with estimates of the level of offtake of natural resources that would be sustainable and with safe limits on pollution levels. They may also be needed to support the preparation of special management/action plans such as those for endangered species and threatened habitats. Examples of conservation studies needed in the Altai Sayan eco-region are as follows:

• Wildlife: Studies of demography, movements, reproduction and mortality.

### Argali sheep

- Genetic survey of allele frequency diversity to determine what levels of genetic heterozygosity exist within small isolated populations;
- o Compilation of historic records on sex ratio, and lambing success;
- Mapping project on observed sightings over time, preferably with information on sex and age;
- Mapping project to demonstrate potential habitat throughout the project area.

### Reindeer

• Transboundary surveys to assess whether there are still wild reindeer in Mongolia and there movements across the border with Russia. The results should be incorporated into a feasibility study of transboundary conservation. Counts that provide information on the number of males and females and calves of all groups would be desirable. If possible tissue samples should be obtained and compared with domesticated reindeer living in the same habitat.

### Moose

• Current distribution, group size, sex ratio and calf : female ratios.

### Red Deer

 Current distribution, group size, sex ratio and calf : female ratios. In addition movements need to be studied as part of a feasibility study of transboundary conservation along the border with China in Sagsai Sum, Bayan Olgii

### Musk Deer

• Current distribution, sex ratio;

### Wild Pig

• Current distribution, group size;

### Brown Bear and Wolverine

• Current distribution and abundance;

### Altai Snowcock

o Distribution of nesting habitat, mortality factors, and nesting success.

- **Forestry:** Studies aimed at determining the sustainable offtake of firewood and timber in one or more *sums*, given the need to maintain the forest for production and as a habitat for biodiversity. The project should also assess and compare the biodiversity in areas of cleaned and 'uncleaned' forest, and in areas within and outside protected areas, and make recommendations accordingly.
- **Fisheries:** Studies aimed at determining the sustainable offtake for a focal species, possibly Taimen. The project also needs to assess and compare fish populations and other indicators of the health of the aquatic ecosystem in rivers with and without upstream mining activities, so that it is in a position to advise authorities on mining impacts.
- **Pastures:** Measurements of pasture productivity, standing crop, cover and species composition are technically demanding and time-consuming. It is therefore recommended that the project collects only the minimum information required to monitor trends towards desertification.
- **Mines:** The project needs to work with the mining industry to assess pollution inflows and the length of rivers that can be adversely affected by pollution derived from mining.

# **ANNEX 11. MTE Interim Report - Project Management**

Altai Sayan Project

Community-based Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mountain Landscapes of Mongolia's Altai Sayan Eco-region

# **Mid-Term Evaluation**

**Project Design, Management, Implementation and Results** 

Peter Hunnam and Ganbat Munkhtuvshin November 2008

Ministry of Nature & Environment United Nations Development Programme Global Environment Facility

### 8.1.1 Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASP	Altai Sayan Project
CB	Community-based
CBO	Community-based organisation
CEDO	Community Empowerment & Development Officer
СО	Country Office
DI	Designated Institution
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GO	Government Organisation
GoM	Government of Mongolia
GTZ	German development agency
HG	Herder Group
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPECON	Initiative for People-Centered Conservation (NGO)
ITA	International Technical Advisor
LDS	Livelihoods development support
LES	Logical Framework
LMA	Land Management Agency
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
METE	Mongolian Environmental Trust Fund
MEAσ	Ministry of Food & Agriculture
MFF	Ministry of Finance & Economy
MIRE	Monitoring information reporting evaluation
MNE	Ministry of Nature & Environment
MoM	Means of measurement
Mol	Memorandum of Understanding
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NCSA	National Capacity Self Assessment
NGO	Non-government organisation
NPD	National Project Director
NPM	National Project Manager
NRM	Natural resource management
PA	Protected Area
РАА	Protected Areas Administration
PDF	Project Development Facility
PIL	Policy institutional and legislative
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PILI	Project Implementation Unit
ProDoc	Project Document and Brief
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SAP	Strategic action program
SDC	Sustainable Development Council
SM	Social Mobiliser
SMART	Specific Measurable Achievable/ Appropriate Realistic and Time-bound
TPR	Tri-Partite Review
TRAC	Target for resource assignments from core
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteer
WPB	Work plan & budget
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature/ World Wildlife Fund
\$	United States dollar

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### Attachments

(separate file)

- I Terms of Reference for Mid-Term Evaluation
- II MTE Itinerary achieved and Organisations and individuals consulted
- III Altai Sayan Project Logical Framework
- IV Initial list of agencies and projects active in the Altai Sayan regions

# 8.2 Introduction

### 8.2.1 Project context

The project titled *Community-based conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mountain Landscapes of Mongolia's Altai Sayan Eco-region* is a 5-year initiative implemented by the Government of Mongolia with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and financing from the Global Environment Facility and the Dutch Government. It is concerned with testing a community-based approach to natural resource management and conservation in four of the western *aimags* (provinces) of Mongolia, on the country's borders with Russia and China. The project combines fieldwork to pilot and demonstrate appropriate mechanisms, with policy and institutional reforms that will enable the local community of semi-nomadic livestock herders to play a central role in biodiversity conservation, coupled with gaining direct benefits from the sustainable use of local natural resources.

The Altai and Sayan regions are mountainous, with important wildlife biodiversity that is under threat from forest and grassland degradation and habitat fragmentation as well as from hunting, competition from livestock, pollution and development of roads associated with increasing mining and urban development. Mongolia's Altai Mountains contain several peaks over 4,000 meters in altitude, and 187 glaciers with a total area of 54,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The Mongolian Sayan is a neighbouring area of 20,605 square kilometers and consists of a basin with more than 300 lakes at an elevation of 500-1600 m and surrounded on all sides by mountains with peaks up to 3000 meter high. The Shishig River flows from the Sayan into Russia's Yenetsi River, one of the world's ten largest rivers, which continues north to the Arctic Ocean. The Altai has four major vegetation zones – alpine, steppe, forest steppe, and desert steppe – while the Sayan is dominated by tundra, taiga forest and forest steppe. The region is home to some of the largest populations of argali (*Ovis ammon*), the world's largest wild sheep, the globally endangered snow leopard (*Unica unica*) and its main prey species the Siberian ibex (*Capra sibirica*). (Project brief, 2004).

### 8.2.2 Mid-Term Project Evaluation

This report is based of an evaluation of the core project management aspects of the Altai Sayan, conducted by two independent consultants in November 2008. It reviews and evaluates the project <u>concept and design</u>; the arrangements made for <u>project inception and management</u>; details of <u>project financing</u>, <u>expenditure and administration</u>; and <u>progress and achievements</u> over the first four years of project implementation. The report makes <u>recommendations</u> for strengthening the remaining period of project implementation. An evaluation of the biodiversity and research achievements of the project was conducted by two other consultants over the same period. The two reports together comprise the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the Altai Sayan Project. The Terms of Reference for the MTE form **Attachment I** to the report.

A mid-term project evaluation is a UNDP requirement for all GEF full-size and medium-size projects and is intended to provide an independent and objective assessment of the project and its implementation: to identify potential project design and implementation problems; assess progress towards the achievement of planned objectives; identify and document lessons; and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve project implementation and the sustainability of impacts, including recommendations about replication and exit strategies.
For the Altai Sayan project, the evaluation involved review of project design documents and progress reports, administration arrangements, budget financing and expenditure, and activities on the ground. Over a two-week period, the project management evaluation team visited the project office in Ulan Bataar and the project offices and field sites in two of the target *aimags*, Uvs and Khovd. The itinerary achieved and organisations and individuals consulted by the mission are detailed in **Attachment II**.

The evaluation mission was short but provided good opportunities for intensive consultations and observation of field results. At the outset of the mission, the consultants were briefed by UNDP Mongolia and met the National Project Director, and the newly-appointed National Project Manager and main office staff. The field travel through Uvs and Khovd *aimags* was led most ably by the respective project Coordinators, who provided invaluable information and commentary.

It was particularly valuable also for the team to have discussions in the middle of the mission with the head of the UNDP Mongolia environment unit who was visiting the Khovd project office at the same time, and for the mission to be accompanied through Khovd *aimag* by the NPM. These arrangements provided good opportunities for participation and feedback during the evaluation. Following the field visits, both consultant teams made a presentation in Ulan Bataar to members of the Project Steering Committee, to report on the evaluation mission and findings, and outline their draft recommendations for the project.

# 8.3 Mid-Term Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

Project Design, Management, Implementation and Results

## 8.3.1 Summary of MTE Ratings and Recommendations

For some sections of the evaluation, the consultants were asked to provide an overall <u>rating</u> of that aspect of the project's performance to date, based on a simple four point scale<sup>29</sup>. These ratings are collated below.

Aspect	$HS - S - MS - U^1$
Project design/ project plan	$\mathrm{HS}-\mathrm{S}-\mathrm{MS}-\mathbf{U}$
Implementation approach	$\mathrm{HS}-\mathbf{S}-\mathrm{MS}-\mathrm{U}$
Monitoring & evaluation	$\mathrm{HS}-\mathrm{S}-\mathbf{MS}-\mathrm{U}$
Stakeholder participation in implementation	$\mathrm{HS}-\mathrm{S}-\mathbf{MS}-\mathrm{U}$
Results achieved under Output 1	$\mathrm{HS}-\mathrm{S}-\mathbf{MS}-\mathrm{U}$
Results achieved under Output 2	$\mathrm{HS}-\mathrm{S}-\mathbf{MS}-\mathrm{U}$
Results achieved under Output 3	$\mathrm{HS}-\mathrm{S}-\mathbf{MS}-\mathrm{U}$
Results achieved under Output 4	$\mathrm{HS}-\mathrm{S}-\mathbf{MS}-\mathrm{U}$
Results achieved under Output 5	$\mathrm{HS}-\mathbf{S}-\mathrm{MS}-\mathrm{U}$

Throughout the report, <u>recommendations</u> are made for strengthening delivery of the project following the MTE. For ease of reference, these recommendations are collated in the section below. There is a total of 15 recommendations, as listed in the following table, against the agency or individual suggested as lead for each recommendation:

	Rec	commendation	Lead
Project Design	1.	Project design structure and strategies	NPM, NPD, TPR
	2.	Logical framework	NPM
Project implementation arrangements	3.	Strategic role of Government and MNE	NPD
	4.	Collaborative programming for Altai Sayan conservation and development	NPM, NPD, UNDP
Project	5.	Project supervision, direction and leadership	TPR
supervision and management	6.	Project staff, employment conditions, and professional development	TPR
Project	7.	Budget and expenditure management	NPM, NPD
implementation	8.	Project duration and extension	TPR
approacn	9.	Monitoring & evaluation	NPM, M&E Officer
	10.	Stakeholder participation	NPM
	11.	Strategies for sustainability and replication	NPM, TPR
Project	12.	Output 1: Institution and policy development	NPM, NPD
achievements	13.	<b>Output 2: Information management</b>	NPM
	14.	Output 4: Trans-boundary conservation	NPM, NPD

29

Rating scale: HS Highly Satisfactory; S Satisfactory; MS Marginally Satisfactory; U Unsatisfactory

#### **15.** Output **5:** Livelihoods development

•

# **Project Design**

## • <u>Project design structure and strategies</u>

**Recommendation** (1a) is to re-affirm very clearly the substance of what the AS Project is aiming to do and to achieve. **Recommendation** (1b) is for the project to plan the main strategies, i.e. <u>how</u> each of the Components will be implemented and their key Outputs achieved. The project's core set of main components and their objectives should be reworded. Each should be a singular, clear objective, with a more specific focus than in the original project plan. The component Outcomes must act in combination with one another, so that the overall project works towards achieving its purpose.

The Purpose of the AS Project is to establish a landscape conservation system across the Altai – Sayan region. Component Outcome 1 should be focused clearly on <u>policy</u>, <u>legislation</u> <u>and institutional development</u>; i.e. putting in place the governance framework or "enabling environment" that will support, develop and replicate the proposed regional landscape conservation system. Outcome 2 should be focused on introducing <u>community-based and</u> <u>collaborative mechanisms for integrated natural resource management and conservation</u>. Component Outcome 3 should be focused unequivocally on <u>development of livelihoods and</u> <u>income generation</u> for local community members.

Under each confirmed Outcome, a set of 2-5 specific Outputs should be developed by project management as a key step in revising the project plan and logical framework. The planned set of around 12 Outputs are the crucial middle-level objectives around which the project's activities will be organised, and so should be crafted carefully.

## Logical framework

**Recommendation** (2) is to revise the project logical framework (LF) in line with recommended actions (table 2); get it approved as the central guiding plan for the remainder of the project, and then to re-form the main project management tools based on the revised LF.

## **Project implementation arrangements**

# • <u>Strategic role of Government and Ministry of Nature & Environment</u>

**Recommendation (3)** is for the Ministry of Nature & Environment (MNE) to revise its relationship with the AS Project in order to facilitate substantive interactions between the ASP, MNE, MFAg and GoM. Interactions should include MNE organising for GoM policy and planning staff to work proactively with the AS project, to deliver the required institutional and policy reforms in support of the shared objective of sustaining and replicating a landscape-scale, integrated, community-based conservation system.

<u>Collaborative programming for Altai Sayan conservation and development</u>

**Recommendation (4)** is for AS project management, MNE and UNDP Mongolia to convene a small high-level working group to engage systematically with the large number of relevant agencies and projects active in Altai Sayan region, and prepare jointly a <u>common AS</u> <u>strategic action program</u> for conservation and sustainable development of the region.

## Project supervision and management

# <u>Strengthen project supervision, direction and leadership</u>

**Recommendation** (5) is to streamline and strengthen the arrangements for project supervision, direction and leadership, in three main ways:

a. Project supervision, direction and policy-setting responsibilities should revert to the small, formal **TPR** (MNE, UNDP, MFE) which should be convened once or

twice annually, and its decisions and recommendations conveyed to the PSC and project management. The position of National Project Manager (**NPM**) should be empowered to drive all aspects of project management, in accordance with the Project Document and approved annual project plans and budgets. Supervision of the project operations and staff, and day-to-day administration responsibilities should be delegated formally to the NPM, who should report to the NPD and TPR.

- b. The **NPD** and PSC Chair (who has numerous other responsibilities) should be enabled to fulfil his second, pivotal function more pro-actively, i.e. policy and institutional linkage between ASP, MNE and GoM), by working primarily as the principal strategist with the PSC, guiding the integrity of the project in line with the revised project plan and logical framework. The NPD should delegate all day-to-day management and administration to the NPM.
- c. The **PSC** (whose members are busy people) should be asked to concentrate more fully on its primary, "outwards" set of responsibilities, to focus the PSC agenda on the key strategic, policy and program issues concerning conservation, NRM and sustainable development. The PSC should <u>not</u> be involved in project supervision, work plan and budget approval, staffing, administrative matters, etc.

• Project staff, employment conditions, and professional development

**Recommendation (6.1)** is for the project staff complement and position descriptions to be reviewed by the NPM, in conjunction with clarifying the project's main Component Outcome and Output objectives and strategies (**recommendation 1**), and confirming the project plan and budget for the remaining duration (**recommendation 8**). The composition of the project team should be revised to ensure that the planned strategies will be well-led and the objectives can be met. Consideration should be given to the following suggestions from the MTE:

- a. Delegate increased authority to the NPM, and strengthen a project senior executive group comprising the NPM and the 4 PIU Coordinators with greater direct responsibilities for project planning, supervision and management.
- b. Strengthen the project team in the area of <u>policy</u>, <u>institutional and legislative</u> (<u>PIL</u>) <u>development</u> (current Output 1). This could be done by assigning lead responsibility for PIL work to the NPM (national PIL) and four Coordinators (PIL work in each *aimag*). These project staff should work in close collaboration with their official counterparts in each government. Short-term PIL experts should be contracted to support strong implementation of this component.
- c. Strengthen the project team in the area of <u>natural resource management planning</u> <u>and action</u> (CB+INRM: community-based, collaborative and integrated/ intersectoral), to deliver current Outputs 3 and 5 more effectively. This could be done by changing the role of the main office CEDO into the project's lead expert on introducing CB+ INRM; revising the ToR of the 4 *aimag* CEDOs and the 20 SMs; and substantially extending the range of activities and capacities of this main corps of field staff. Rather than working individually in isolation, these 24 staff should also form sub-teams to work together more intensely and introduce CB+INRM sequentially in selected *soums*.
- d. Re-define the role of the M&E officer to strengthen and integrate all aspects of the project's management of <u>Information, Research, M&E</u>, and <u>Communications</u>.
- e. The positions of Research Officer and UNV for research should not be filled. Most future "research work" by the project should be organised as "participatory action research", undertaken directly by local community groups and individuals,

and facilitated by the above CB+INRM teams. The amount of future specialised research requiring outside experts should be reduced significantly, and simply sub-contracted to an appropriate research NGO or institution.

f. The position of ITA should not be refilled. As suggested above, it is more important and relevant to strengthen the roles and technical capacities of the main full-time project staff, especially the NPM, PIU Coordinators, revised-CEDOs and revised-M&E officer. Funds available should be used to hire series of shortterm technical advisors as required.

**Recommendation (6.2)** is for staff employment conditions to be reviewed carefully (by a 3person team from the ASP, MNE and UNDP, tasked to report back to the NPD within 2 months with costed proposals to address all major issues raised by staff). MNE and UNDP are urged to take a flexible approach to implementing the proposals and putting in place a package of conditions (pay, DSA, insurance, workplace standards, roles and responsibilities) that will attract, retain and motivate good quality staff.

**Recommendation** (6.3) is for project management to plan and implement a more systematic program of professional development for all interested staff members over the life of the project.

## **Project implementation approach**

# • Budget and expenditure management

**Recommendation** (7) is for the project management to prepare, use, monitor and report against a fresh Outputs budget, for each financial quarter and year, for the remainder of the project. This should be based on the revised hierarchy of Outcome and Output objectives (**recommendation** (1)). All anticipated costs of achieving each substantive Output (including a share of "project management costs") should be included in the budget for each Output; all relevant expenditure should be recorded subsequently under that Output.

## • Project duration and extension

**Recommendation (8)** is to extend the project duration, provisionally to the end of 2012, taking into account the balance of funds available (56% of the original combined budget); the need to clarify, focus and simplify the project plan, and the need to allow sufficient time for the project to achieve the major part of its planned objectives. It is important for the revised duration to apply to the project as a whole and for each of the supporting parties – the Dutch Government, UNDP and GEF as well as GoM – to accept and approve the proposed arrangement. The no-cost extension should be confirmed following the MTE by preparing and approving a fresh project implementation plan for this period, specifying the revised Outputs to be achieved and the quarterly Output budget requirements.

# • Monitoring & Evaluation

**Recommendation (9)** is that following the MTE, the project's M&E program should be replanned based on a more systematic and pragmatic approach. The steps to be taken are as recommended for development of the logical framework: confirm the main logical hierarchy of SMART<sup>30</sup> objectives, especially the critical middle-level Outputs; devise 2-3 indicators for each of the middle- and high-level objectives; and base the project's monitoring – information – reporting – evaluation system on these indicators.

## • <u>Stakeholder participation</u>

**Recommendation** (10) is to identify the key stakeholder groups for each of the main project outcomes and outputs, and to make them the central participants, by planning and organising

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> A SMART objective is one that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Appropriate, Realistic and Timebound.

project activities so that they are implemented primarily <u>by</u> the participants, with facilitation and assistance from the project.

# • <u>Strategies for sustainability and replication</u>

**Recommendation (11)** is for the project management to prepare simple strategies for sustainability and replication, as part of re-planning the project logical framework, component strategies, budget and duration, immediately following the MTE. The sustainability strategy should include plans for continuation of each of the key elements of the new conservation system that is to be introduced by the project, i.e. especially the new institution or institutional arrangements for inter-sectoral, inter-agency, collaborative and community-based governance and management of all natural resources in an area – see **recommendation 12**. The replication strategy should specify what the project and its key supporting partners are going to do to facilitate extension and establishment of these new measures in new administrative areas (additional *soum, aimags* and regions).

## **Project achievements**

# Output 1: Institution and policy development

**Recommendation (12)** is for the project management to urgently re-think its strategy for component 1, and to re-define the crucial <u>institution and planning model</u> that the project will develop and use to support (a) appropriate, inclusive herder community institutions; and (b) appropriate, equitable, democratic herder community-based natural resource planning and management procedures, which can be scaled-up from local to regional landscape. The project's work on land-use planning should be adjusted towards <u>reforming</u> the current *aimag* and *soum* agency-led processes, in favour of the ASP model of community-based and integrated NR planning and management.

The MTE had a number of positive discussions about the value of the ASP helping the herder community *bag* by *bag* to prepare and implement integrated NRM plans, linked within a reformed NRM framework at *soum* and then at *aimag* levels. The advantages of an approach such as this are that it is bottom-up within a guiding framework; it is in line with the principle of empowering the herders themselves to make decisions as a community about the future use of the natural resources in their area – land, water, pasture, forest, wildlife; it provides for equitable, democratic decision-making by all the herders to access and use local resources to be recognised, and their needs to be taken into account; it emphasises the responsibilities of the various government agencies to work together to support and facilitate integrated NRM decision-making by the herders themselves.

As soon as practicable, this type of approach should be defined, piloted by the project and then promoted as the ASP model. A significant step must be for the several Ministries involved, especially MNE and MFAg, to endorse the "ASP model" as a <u>whole-of-government policy</u>, and adjust legislation as necessary. This model can then be used to continue the guidance provided to herder communities, *soum* and *aimag* governments, by the AS project and by other agencies and projects.

# • Output 2: Information management

**Recommendation** (13) is to integrate information-gathering and management with the project's core objective of facilitating community-based and collaborative management of natural resources. This will mean giving priority to the information needs of the local community rather than government, and for tackling resource management issues rather than enhancing general awareness or scientific understanding.

# **Output 3: Landscape conservation**

## Refer to recommendation (12).

## • Output 4: Trans-boundary conservation

**Recommendation** (14) is to organise as soon as possible a simple routine exchange of project information between the various conservation and development programs and projects that are active in the different countries in the trans-boundary region. For the ASP, this will require the NPM to establish contact with the respective managers of other relevant projects, and share copies of translated versions of the ASP annual report. It would be valuable to conduct this inter-project liaison activity in conjunction with the collaborative programming proposed under **recommendation (4)**.

# • <u>Output 5: Livelihoods development</u>

**Recommendation (15)** is for the project to consolidate its livelihoods development support (LDS) work, by first planning and then organising a revised strategy (objectives, indicators, principles and procedures) for implementation of this component. Actions that should be considered in the strategy include the following:

- f. Joint LDS programming with other agencies and programs active in AS regions.
- g. Livelihoods "options assessments" linked to local (*bag* and *soum*) CB NRM planning.
- h. Analysis of environmental sustainability and social costs & benefits built into each livelihoods enterprise initiative.
- i. Technical resources for livelihoods developments linked to the "information centres" developed at *bag* and *soum* centres.
- j. Revolving loans scheme instituted at *soum* and *aimag* levels.

# 8.4 **Project Formulation**

- The Altai Sayan Project (ASP) was conceived in the late-1990s and designed in the period 2000 to 2002, by UNDP-contracted consultants using the Project Development Facility (PDF) of the GEF. Reports on the PDF exercise, the process followed, results of studies undertaken and discussions organised by the design team consultants have not been reviewed or evaluated by the MTE.
- 2. The main product arising from the PDF exercise was the Project Brief that was submitted to and approved by the GEF in 2006 and forms the major part of the Project Document completed and approved by the Government of Mongolia and UNDP in 2006, with UNDP as the nominated GEF Implementing Agency for the Altai Sayan Project. The following evaluation of the project concept and design are based primarily on the combined 2006 Project Document and Brief (ProDoc), although it is noted that several of the detailed annexes referred to in the ProDoc were not made available to the MTE.

# 8.4.1 Problem analysis

- 3. A general finding of the MTE is that the Project Brief presents an excellent account of the situation in Mongolia pertaining to environmental governance, biodiversity conservation, land management and development. The analysis is thorough but succinct and conveys clearly the prevailing problems facing the country and the western region in which the Altai and Sayan mountain ranges lie. The key issues that provide justification for a project intervention may be summarised as follows:
  - a. The mountainous regions of Altai and Sayan in far north-western Mongolia contain biological diversity in a range of natural habitats that is of national, regional and global significance for conservation.
  - b. The land, water, grassland, forest and wildlife resources of the two regions have been used extensively for centuries by the local herder community for their subsistence and livelihoods. The community is primarily dependent on maintaining large numbers of livestock (sheep, goats, cattle, yaks, camels and horses), which are moved seasonally to different areas of pasture. Firewood, timber and water collection and wildlife hunting are other important resource uses.
  - c. All land and natural resources are owned by the State and used as common property by the herder community. Active land or habitat management is virtually absent. There is little or no regulation of livestock grazing by area or stocking density, or of firewood or timber collection. Traditional community-centred mechanisms have been broken down for much of the past century. Much of the region's landscape is heavily-grazed grassland and forest land, seriouslydegraded in many parts, and highly vulnerable to vegetation loss, soil erosion and desertification, exacerbated by periodic droughts and flash-flooding.
  - d. Conventional state-managed nature conservation is based on protecting discrete sites, so that a number of mountain peaks, lakes and forested areas, covering roughly 10% of the landscape, are currently designated national Protected Areas and policed by government rangers. There is little or local community involvement in management. The PAs and the wildlife populations they contain are not viable without habitat protection and restoration across the landscape that surrounds and connects them to one another.

4. The process of GEF project formulation includes appraisal of the design brief by a reviewer from the GEF Scientific & Technical Advisory Panel and by GEF Council member governments. In the case of the Altai Sayan Project, the MTE considers that the STAP and Council members made comments on the design that were particularly perceptive and useful. However, it is apparent that the comments resulted in little further change being made to the project design.

8.4.2 Project Design	
Rating: Project design/ project plan	HS - S - MS - U

5. Based on the formulation mission and situation analysis, a project design was prepared and submitted for appraisal and subsequent approval. The project (ASP), titled *Community-based Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Mountain Landscapes of Mongolia's Altai Sayan Eco-region*, was planned and approved as a five year initiative to contribute to the stated goal of "conservation and sustainable use of globally significant mountain biological diversity...". The design is laid out in the combined Project Document and Project Brief (ProDoc), which are reviewed below, first in terms of substance, with reference to each of the planned objectives and implementation strategies to be followed; and second in terms of structure and organisation of the design, by reference to the Logical Framework.

# 8.4.2.1 Project component objectives and strategies

- 6. There were three main substantive components planned, plus a fourth on learning and disseminating lessons from the project. These components are described as "Immediate Objectives" in the text of the ProDoc. One or two main "Outputs" or sets of results were planned under each of the Immediate Objectives. The project's main objectives as described in the Project Document are summarised in **table 1**.
- 7. The phrasing of some of the objective statements is complex and their meanings are not clear. It would have been a considerable help to the project staff (and the MTE) if the statements had been edited thoroughly into simpler, straightforward language that was not ambiguous or vague. In an attempt at clarifying what the project is designed to accomplish, included in **table 1** are the MTE's interpretations of the substantial meaning of each objective statement. These are suggestions for project management to consider when they review and develop the project logical framework, rather than proposed actual wording.

Objective statements in AS Project Document		Suggested substance
(Goal)	Conservation and sustainable use of globally significant mountain biological diversity in Mongolia's Altai Sayan Eco-region	Conservation of the biological diversity of Altai-Sayan Ecoregion <sup>31</sup>
Purpose	The successful completion of the project will result in stakeholders devising innovative and adaptive practices to mitigate and prevent	Establishment of landscape conservation system across Mongolia's Altai and Sayan

 Table 1: Project objectives (drawn from the Project Document)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> The **goal** of the AS Project is to <u>contribute</u> to the conservation of biological diversity as a whole, of the Altai Sayan Eco-Region as a whole. The suggested **purpose** statement makes it clear that the AS project will work specifically on Mongolia's portion of the Eco-Region.

Objective stat	tements in AS Project Document	Suggested substance	
	threats to biological diversity by applying new partnerships, conservation tools, information, and sustainable livelihoods to conserve biological diversity.	regions	
Objective 1	Biodiversity conservation objectives integrated into productive sector institutions and policies	Institutional development, policy reform, legislation; at local	
Output I	Conservation capacity of productive sector institutions and policies is strengthened	and national levels	
Output 2	Information baseline established and strengthened as basis for integrating conservation into productive sectors	Research, information, knowledge	
Objective 2	To strengthen 'traditional' protected area-based approaches by expanding their scope to include the landscape around them	Integrated management of natural resources; landscape / regional scale; community-based and co-	
Output 3	Landscape-based approach to conservation established and operational	management <sup>32</sup>	
Output 4	Strengthened trans-boundary conservation action and institutional linkages	International conservation institutional linkages	
Objective 3	To successfully demonstrate how to integrate biodiversity into resource management and economic development practice & policy	Sustainable resource-based livelihoods development	
Output 5	Grazing, forest-use, sport hunting management, and tourism, are re-oriented to support conservation while improving livelihoods		
Objective 4	To implement a project that learns from its successes and failures and shares these lessons and replicates best practices effectively among its own stakeholders and with others.	Project management Collaborative program development	
Output 6	Monitoring and evaluation is applied as a tool for adaptive management, assessment of project impact/progress and replication of best practices		

- 8. The project's main frame of an inter-connected set of major components is not specified clearly in the project design. The main component Objectives (in table 1 above) do not appear in the logical framework (see below). The following are three examples of the ASP's planned objectives that are difficult to interpret, with suggestions from the MTE for clearer, more focused statements:
  - The Purpose statement reads: "The successful completion of the project will result in stakeholders devising innovative and adaptive practices to mitigate and prevent threats to biological diversity by applying new partnerships, conservation tools, information, and sustainable livelihoods to conserve biological diversity." It is good practice for the project purpose to be singular, specific, and very clear in meaning, so as to serve as an anchor for the entire project. The MTE's suggestion for a revised Purpose statement is as follows: Establishment of a landscape conservation system across Mongolia's Altai and Sayan regions.
  - The objective for component Output 1 reads: "Biodiversity conservation objectives integrated into productive sector institutions and policies." This

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> The MTE considers it remiss that none of the ASP's objectives – only the project title – specifies "community-based" NRM or conservation.

component of the project should be clearly focused on policy and institutional outcomes. The MTE's suggested re-wording is for a component or Outcome objective as follows: **Policy, legislation and institutional development**. Under this component, a set of planned Outputs is needed, focused on the reform and development of policies and institutions, at community, *soum, aimag* and national levels, that will support community-based, collaborative, and integrated management of natural resources (<u>and</u> international/ trans-boundary cooperation).

- The objective for Objective 3 reads: "*To successfully demonstrate how to integrate biodiversity into resource management and economic development practice & policy.*" Confusingly, this objective seems similar to Output 1. The MTE suggests that it should be re-worded as follows: **Sustainable, resource-based livelihoods development**, with a clear focus on achieving economic or livelihoods development.
- 9. Based on its assessment of the project design, the MTE recommends (1a) that it is important to re-affirm very clearly the substance of what the AS Project is aiming to do and to achieve. The project's core set of main components and their objectives should be re-worded. Each should be a singular, clear objective, with a more specific focus than in the original project plan. The three component Outcomes must work in combination with one another, so that the overall project works towards achieving its Purpose of establishing a landscape conservation system across the Altai Sayan region. Under each confirmed Outcome, a set of 2-5 specific Outputs should be developed by project management as a key step in revising the project plan and logical framework following the MTE. The planned set of around 12 Outputs are the crucial middle-level objectives around which the project's activities will be organised, and so should be crafted carefully.
- 10. <u>Component Outcome 1</u> should be focused clearly on **policy**, **legislation and institutional development**; i.e. putting in place the governance framework or "enabling environment" that will support, develop and replicate the proposed regional landscape conservation system. The work should target the policy and institutional framework at local community, *soum* and *aimag*, regional and national levels; and should support (a) regional landscape conservation; and (b) local community-based and collaborative management. A key first step is to plan, with relevant stakeholders, what new and revised policies, legislation and institutions will be required to serve (a) and (b) above; and then to work out a strategy by which the project will assist the relevant stakeholders to develop the policies, legislation and institutions.
- 11. <u>Component Outcome 2</u> should be focused on introducing **community-based and collaborative mechanisms for integrated natural resource management and conservation**. The MTE considers it confusing and ineffective to divide "conservation work", as in the current project plan, between "Outputs" 3, 4 and 5, concerned respectively with establishing a landscape conservation approach; trans-boundary conservation collaboration; and conservation-oriented livelihoods. The objective should be to establish a system of integrated management of natural resources for conservation and sustainable development, based on local community and government comanagement; across the Altai Sayan Eco-region. The set of subsidiary <u>Outputs</u> would include direct actions in Mongolia's Altai and Sayan regions; and indirect actions

(promotion and exchanges) in Russia, Kazakhstan and China. The key tasks are to pilot and then demonstrate an innovative management system. The proposed means of achieving this outcome are to assist the relevant stakeholders to devise, pilot and subsequently develop, extend and maintain appropriate and effective mechanisms for community-based and collaborative management of natural resources, in an integrated manner across 'sectors' – pasture/ agriculture, forestry, wildlife, land, water, environment, wildlife.

- 12. Components 1 and 2 need to be closely linked: on-the-ground pilot work (under Component 2) should inform the development of policies (Component 1), which in turn should promote and guide the further development of the conservation mechanisms (Component 2). Similarly, community conservation and co-management institutions will be piloted and demonstrated under 2, then formalised/ legalised and further supported under 1, as key parts of the institutional framework.
- 13. <u>Component Outcome 3</u> should be focused unequivocally on **development of livelihoods** and income generation for local community members. While the project will be assisting particularly with opportunities based on using natural resources, and with their environmental sustainability and compatibility with the community-based NRM system, the indicators of success under this Outcome will be increased numbers and diversity of livelihood activities and increased benefits from them.
- 14. A fourth component, <u>Outcome 4</u>, should be concerned with effective and efficient **project management**, as intended in the current project plan. Some of the more specific Outputs to be planned under this Component might include: project implementation; management of monitoring, information, reporting and evaluation; communications; human resources management; development of collaborative programming for conservation and sustainable development in Mongolia. These form a much broader range of outputs than are covered by the current wording for Immediate Objective 4 or Output 6.
- 15. In order to strengthen and clarify the project design, it is good practice to plan the main <u>strategy</u> by which each of the main Components will be implemented. This is most usefully done at the project inception stage, but it is **recommended (1b)** that, following the MTE, the Altai Sayan project should prepare such strategies for the above four Components and their key Outputs. Suggested guidelines are as follows:
  - e. Identify lead project staff, consultant or partner for each of the Components.
  - f. Plan the strategy that the project will use to implement each component over the remainder of the project duration: write an <u>outline description of who will do</u> what, with whom, where, when and how, in order to achieve the objective.
  - g. Communicate these strategies and implementation progress to maintain interest and engagement with key target stakeholders/ partners.
  - h. Plan joint strategies with stakeholders/ partners pursuing similar objectives.

# 8.4.2.2 Project Logical Framework

16. It is standard best practice for the whole project plan to be summarised in a rigorouslyprepared Logical Framework (LF) or equivalent management tool (for planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation). All UNDP-GEF projects are required to prepare a logical framework. A key finding of the MTE is that the AS Project does not have a well-prepared logical framework; the version in the ProDoc (Annex ii) is poorly-developed, and subsequent attempts by project management to revise the logical framework have not been adequate or successful. Recent revisions have devised longer lists of indicators to monitor the project's performance, but have not improved the design of the project and produced a plan, summarised as the LF, that is readily able to be implemented and likely to achieve success. At the time of the MTE, it seems that there was little understanding among supervisors or management staff of the overall logic of the project plan, and significantly, little or no use was being made of the logical framework to guide project implementation, monitoring or reporting.

- 17. The MTE considers that the inadequacies of the ASP's logical framework have been a major hindrance to the efficient and effective organisation and implementation of the project to date. A well-developed and clearly-understood LF is needed as the basis for each of the other main tools required for the on-going planning and management of the AS project. These include tools which the ASP uses now the budget plan and the detailed work plan; and other tools that project management needs to develop, including a whole-duration implementation plan, clear strategies for each of the main project components; and a robust information, M&E, reporting and communications system.
- 18. MTE comments on the ASP's logical framework are as follows (for ease of reference, the logical framework from the ProDoc Annex ii, the summary project objectives from the ProDoc narrative, and the latest revision of the logical framework devised by the ITA are reproduced in **attachment III** to this report):
  - a. Generally, the LF is poorly-edited and not easy to understand. It needs to be restructured and further-developed in order to provide a useful tool for project management. It would be valuable to develop a simpler version for communication purposes, and a Mongolian language version, recognising that English is not understood by the majority of project staff or stakeholders.
  - b. The main difficulty with using the original <u>and</u> the revised LFs is that there is no logical hierarchy of clear objectives forming the 'backbone' of the entire project. The objectives should be presented on the vertical axis of the LF in the left-hand column. Both the original and revised versions of the LF consist of only Goal and Purpose statements and 6 major "Outputs"<sup>33</sup>, which are not clearly-worded or well-formulated as SMART<sup>34</sup> objectives, suggesting that no-one has sufficiently thought through or planned out a clear logical hierarchy of objectives as the core of the project plan. It is suggested that four tiers of objectives (Outputs/ Results; Component Objectives or Outcomes; Purpose; Goal) should be carefully crafted, so that they do progress logically from one tier up to the next, provided that the Risks noted in the right-hand column do not arise and block progress.
  - c. The horizontal axis of the ASP LF is better developed than the vertical. It presents a summary of how the progress or performance of each component of the project will be monitored. The main problems are that the Indicators are long-winded, not SMART, and there are too many of them for each of the 6 Outputs (for example there are 9 Indicators and Milestones for Output 3). It is better practice for each row of the LF to include a singular objective statement; a <u>few</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> The current "Outputs" are also too high-level, lying somewhere between Outcomes and Outputs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> A SMART objective is one that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Appropriate, Realistic and Timebound.

(1-3) key indicators that signal progress towards the objective; a note on how data on each indicator will be obtained ('the means of measurement or verification', MoM). Also alongside each objective, a more tangible Target and/ or progressive Milestones may be included in each row, plus a note on the Baseline level of the Indicator (the first time it is measured).

- d. Perhaps because the project's objectives are inadequately developed and unclear, the project designers tried to include far too much in the Indicators column. The recent revisions have made this worse, by increasing the numbers of indicators from an average of 6-7 per objective statement, to an average of over 10. Many of the current Indicators are really descriptions of some of the results or activities that are planned, and these should be moved down the LF to a lower layer, or out of the LF altogether into a detailed plan for the specific component of the project.
- e. Some of the Indicators are not appropriate or do not provide useful measures of progress towards the adjacent objective. This is caused perhaps by the wording of the objective statement being too difficult to interpret and understand. However, it also suggests that the project stakeholders do not have a clear (or common) understanding of the essential purpose and logic of the project or of what it can realistically achieve. One example is the use of "(increase in) numbers and distribution of landscape species" as an indicator of achieving the Purpose of the project. The MTE considers that the essential purpose of the AS Project is to establish community-based natural resource management as the basis of a reformed conservation system across the Altai and Sayan regions; in which case, the Purpose Indicator should measure the introduction of the conservation system or of CBNRM.
- 19. A priority **recommendation** (2) of the MTE is for the senior project management staff (using resource persons and consulting with project staff and partners as necessary) to revise the logical framework, get it approved as the central guiding plan for the remainder of the project, and then to re-form the main project management tools based on the revised LF. **Table 2** outlines the main steps that are suggested to revise the LF.

<b>F</b> гашеwork			
Logical Framework revision			
PURPOSE	h.	Re-word a clear, succinct, singular objective as the essential guiding Purpose of the AS Project	
MAIN COMPONENTS COMPONENT OBJECTIVES	i.	With the original "Immediate Objectives" as the starting point, carefully think about and define the set of 3-4 major components that together will form the whole AS project.	
	J.	main component.	
OUTPUTS	k.	Plan the small set of 2-4 Outputs that will be achieved under each main Component. These planned Outputs, perhaps 12-15 in total, are the crucial middle-level results that will be produced by specific sets of project activities.	
	1.	Write a simple, succinct, SMART objective statement for each Output.	
	m.	If useful, specify one or more tangible Targets for each objective, and by when the project plans to reach the Target.	
RISKS/ ASSUMPTIONS	n.	Review and revise as necessary the Risks/ Assumptions associated with each planned objective.	

 Table 2: Summary of recommended actions to revise the Project Logical

 Framework

Logical Framework revi	sion	
INDICATORS	0.	With the current LF indicators as a starting point, specify 1-3
Means of Measurement		simple Indicators for each Component Objective and Output.
(MoM)	p.	Specify a MoM for each indicator – how the project will obtain data on the indicator to monitor progress towards the objective
Means of Measurement (MoM)	p.	simple Indicators for each Component Objective and Output Specify a MoM for each indicator – how the project will ob data on the indicator to monitor progress towards the objec

#### 8.4.3 Country ownership and relevance of the project design

- 20. The MTE considers that the Altai Sayan Project is highly relevant to Mongolia at the present time, and to the Government of Mongolia's vision and priorities. As noted in the project brief, the project was designed in line with priority no. 7 of the Government's Action Programme: "to implement environment policy aimed at providing sustainable development and ecological balance by harmonizing protection of biodiversity with regional socio-economic development". The issues on which the project is to focus are re-affirmed as priority objectives in the MDG-based Comprehensive National Development Strategy of Mongolia, drafted in 2007. These include developing an adequate pasture management system; tackling soil erosion and desertification; conservation and rehabilitation of forest lands; citizens' rights to forest resources; sustainable use of wildlife populations; and cross-sectoral management of natural resources.
- 21. However, the MTE notes that the Government's agenda for biodiversity conservation tends to emphasise strengthening and extension of the existing conventional system of national protected areas, and organisation of management of land, water, forests and pasture land along separate 'sectoral' lines. This is contrary to the approaches chosen for the Altai Sayan project, which are for an integrated, collaborative management system concerned with biodiversity conservation across the landscape and in regional development. This is an issue to be tackled under component 1 of the project, on policy and institutional developments, for which it will be important for MNE, the Government and the AS Project to reach a clear agreement on the planned results, strategy and actions for implementation of the component.

#### 8.4.4 Replication approach planned for the Altai Sayan Project

- 22. The design of the AS project places an emphasis on its strategy to pilot and demonstrate "model" tools and mechanisms, and for these to be <u>replicated</u> in other local *bags* and <u>soums</u>, and <u>sustained</u> in the long-term, by the project building the capacity of "a cross-section of civil-society (*aimag, soum*, and *bag* offices, herder groups, NGOs and Ministry Departments)". The plan proposes also that the project will subsequently "<u>replicate</u> its model activities in other parts of Mongolia and in other parts of multi-country Altai-Sayan eco-region."
- 23. The project's principal strategy for both sustaining and replicating landscape-scale, community-based, collaborative and integrated management of natural resources is information exchange. The project design stresses development of lessons learned across the project's five main Outputs; the use of demonstrations and extension programs; establishment of local "learning centres"; and linkages with similar initiatives by partner organisations government agencies, aid agencies, NGOs. The project plan notes also that complementary Altai Sayan Eco-Region projects in Russia and Kazakhstan have already formed a joint steering committee with Mongolia; and proposes a regional conference "to share lessons... among Russian, Mongolia, Chinese and Kazakh counterparts."

- 24. Much emphasis is placed also on the project forming partnerships with other organisations and programs and transferring knowledge acquired by the project to them. Throughout the project document, work plans and reports, there is considerable recognition given to the need for the project to work in partnership with other agencies, share project resources, organise joint activities, avoid duplication and achieve synergies. Specific reference is made to MNE and to MFAg's large current programs in grazing and grassland management support by ADB and IFAD; to GTZ's Buffer Zone Development Project; WWF's major program and experience in Altai Sayan; a "learning portfolio" of UNDP-supported projects; and several other directly relevant projects by other agencies.
- 25. In addition, the project's designers were relying to some extent on a Mongolian Environmental Trust Fund (METF) to be operational by 2009, and able to fund replication and mainstreaming of conservation activities in the Altai Sayan region and elsewhere in the country. Unfortunately, the initiative to establish the METF foundered in 2006-07.
- 26. The MTE concludes that the AS project to date has not managed to create such an extensive array of partnerships or information exchange. The project does not demonstrate a systematic approach to the development of model tools and mechanisms; to evaluating and demonstrating them; or to drawing and communicating lessons from its experiences (refer to the report section on monitoring and evaluation).

# 8.5 Project Implementation

## **8.5.1** Implementation arrangements

- 27. For the Altai Sayan Project, the GEF Implementing Agency is UNDP Mongolia and the executing agency is the Mongolian national Ministry of Nature & Environment (MNE). The planned project period was five years and the budget was US\$ 4.83 million, provided by the Dutch Government, GEF and UNDP. The responsibilities of the main agencies involved in implementing the AS project are spelt out in the Project Brief, with salient points summarised below:
  - a. Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE) is the focal point for UNDP's technical cooperation in Mongolia.
  - b. MNE is the Designated Institution (DI) in charge of project execution, accountable to MFE and UNDP for achievement of the project's objectives.
  - c. UNDP Mongolia will monitor, ensure the proper use of UNDP, GEF (and presumably Dutch) funds, and support project implementation (recruitment, contracting, procurement assistance).
  - d. The administration of project funds will be the joint responsibility of the UNDP and the MNE. Financial transactions, reporting and auditing will be carried out in compliance with both national regulations and UNDP rules and procedures for national execution.
  - e. MNE will partner with other "Implementing Agencies" to implement the project, including MFAg, WWF and the Initiative for People-Centered Conservation (IPECON). These and other NGOs will be contracted by the DI and UNDP as full partners in implementing most field-level activities under Outputs 1-5.
  - f. Funds for partner organization contracts will be devolved as lump sums and administered by the partner organisation.
- 28. According to the information made available to the MTE, the Altai Sayan Project is being carried out in accordance with the majority of these directions. The main point of departure from what was clearly intended is the failure to establish the project as a collaborative initiative between a number of "full partner" organisations. This gives rise to a broad concern of the MTE, that the AS project has been too isolated, not adequately connected to MNE or mainstream government departments, and not implemented in any sense as a partnership. The MTE notes that the project has commissioned individual consultants to conduct specific activities (trainings, surveys), but is not aware of any major project execution contracts to any institution, government agency or NGO. Of the three important "other Implementing Agencies" specified in the Project Brief, the MTE was informed that MFAg and WWF engagement with the project has been minimal; while no mention was made of IPECON.
- 29. The MTE considers this "isolation" of the project to be a serious issue that has hampered considerably the implementation of the project plan and the project's overall effectiveness. This is a particular concern given the nature of the ASP, which clearly <u>must work primarily through and with the existing institutions and stakeholder</u> <u>organisations</u>, reforming their functions and building their capacities, if it is to have any success.

- 30. The MTE's concerns on this point extend to the two main agencies responsible for overseeing effective delivery of the Altai Sayan Project, UNDP and MNE. For the former, it is apparent that more could be done to create solid, effective working links between its projects. In addition, other UN agencies in Mongolia have their own projects. Several projects in current UN agency portfolios have interests, objectives, and tasks to conduct that overlap with one another and with the Altai Sayan Project. To work more efficiently and effectively towards the common goals of conservation and sustainable development, it would be valuable for UNDP to remove any barriers and actively organise for these projects to work jointly on these areas of overlapping interest.
- 31. Perhaps even more importantly, the various departments within MNE need to engage more directly with and make much more use of the Altai Sayan Project. It is not readily apparent at present that ASP is an initiative of the MNE, whereas in the view of the MTE, a critical objective of the project is to provide assistance directly to MNE for development of its policies, legislation and institutions (and those of its sister Ministries and their *aimag* and *soum*-level counterpart offices), so that MNE can ensure that the landscape-scale, integrated, community-based conservation system that is proposed in the project plan is sustained and replicated. MTE **recommendation (3)** is for the Ministry of Nature & Environment (MNE) to revise its relationship with the AS Project in order to facilitate substantive interactions between the ASP, MNE, MFAg and GoM. Interactions should include MNE organising for GoM policy staff (in government policy and planning units) to work proactively with the AS project, to deliver the required institutional and policy reforms in support of the shared objective of sustaining and replicating a landscape-scale, integrated, community-based conservation system

#### 8.5.2 Partnerships and collaborative programming for conservation

- 32. The AS project design emphasis on forming partnerships is an appropriate and critical consideration, given the large number and significance of relevant programs and projects that are underway, have been undertaken and are planned in Altai Sayan region and elsewhere in Mongolia. A preliminary list is compiled in **attachment IV**. However, it is clear that to date this important strategy has not been developed adequately by the project. Many agencies and projects share the same goal as the ASP, but no joint programs seem to have been developed. Inter-agency MoUs are not enough. There is a strong tendency for projects to work in slightly different ways, through structures that remain separate and preoccupied with their own plans, techniques, finances and administrative procedures. As a consequence, agencies' priorities and projects come and go, they may contradict or hinder one another, fail to learn from one another's results and lessons, and not leave any lasting influence. For the Altai Sayan region at present, the array of comparable initiatives form a significant but unrealised opportunity to organise substantial resources towards the common goals of conservation and sustainable development.
- 33. MTE **recommendation** (4) is for the AS project management, MNE and UNDP Mongolia to convene a small high-level working group that will liaise systematically with the large number of relevant agencies and current and planned projects relevant to the Altai Sayan region, and prepare jointly with them a **common strategic action**

**program** for the region's conservation and sustainable development<sup>35</sup>. The common SAP does not need to be an elaborate or lengthy document, but should provide an overarching framework to which each agency can commit itself, and within which individual projects and joint actions can be organised. The wide range of activities (on institutional development, research, information management, policy reform, legislation, education, training, livelihoods, natural resource management, etc.) will be able to be planned by each project and agency with respect to one another. Common tools can be used for M&E and a continuing process of joint planning and development of the SAP can be supported by all parties. Development of an overarching planning and management framework will enable the activities undertaken by the AS project (and other projects) to be more focused, efficient and effective.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> A program strategy such as this could have been developed as part of the recently-concluded NCSA, National Capacity Self-Assessment (for environmental management), in which MNE and UNDP, UNEP and GEF were involved.

# 8.5.3 Project supervision

# 8.5.3.1 Project Steering Committee

- 34. In accordance with the Project Document, a Project Steering Committee (PSC) has been formed and apparently met, in Ulan Bataar, although no meeting records have been reviewed by the MTE. The intended membership of 13 was as follows, although apparently not all attended the meeting(s):
  - Ministry of Nature & Environment (Chair the National Project Director)
  - Governors of Bayan-Olgii, Khovd, Uvs and Khovsgol *aimags*
  - 2 Members of the National Parliament, elected from the Altai and Sayan regions
  - Ministry of Food & Agriculture
  - Border guard
  - WWF Mongolia Program
  - UNDP Mongolia
  - Representatives from a women's group and a herder association .
- 35. The ProDoc (Appendix B. Annex I, page 86-7) specifies the major dual responsibilities of the PSC. The first is "outwards" from the project, to provide strategic guidance, a forum to ensure integrated approaches among stakeholders, and facilitate supportive actions in their respective organisations. It is notable that most of the institutions flagged in the ProDoc as close partners in implementing the ASP are members of the PSC, emphasising its potential role in driving collaborative programming for conservation and the Altai Sayan regions. The second role of the PSC is "inwards" to the project, to monitor, review progress, oversee and supervise the project.

# 8.5.3.2 National Project Director (NPD)

36. A senior official from MNE has been appointed National Project Director; he chairs the PSC and is responsible to the Government for overseeing proper project implementation. Importantly, the NPD has the pivotal role of developing the linkages between the AS project and the executing agency, MNE, and other government agencies. As noted above, this is a critical function for the AS project in particular, because of its objective to reform policy and institutions, and develop the capacities of MNE and other government departments. It is noted that at present the NPD acts also as the day-to-day administrative director of the project, which is inefficient use of both his and the NPM's time, and detracts from the NPD's strategic guiding role.

# 8.5.3.3 Tripartite Review (TPR)

- 37. UNDP projects in a country are governed by a Tri-Partite Review body, comprising the Government, the Executing Agency and UNDP<sup>36</sup>, and expected to meet at least once a year to receive annual progress and financial reports and approve the future work plan and budget. The ASP ProDoc refers to it as "the highest policy-level meeting of the parties directly involved in the implementation of a project." The MTE was advised that the TPR has not been convened for the ASP, and its functions have tended to be devolved to the PSC.
- 38. As a relatively-large, complex, externally-funded project, the ASP needs to receive careful and rigorous strategic directions, in order to increase the chances of successful

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> In the case of the ASP, TPR membership would be MFE, MNE (the NPD or his senior officer) and UNDP.

implementation and achievement of the planned results. The MTE is concerned that the supervision arrangements have not provided clear direction for the project, but may have tended to dwell on minor management and administrative decisions.

- 39. **Recommendation (5)** is to streamline and strengthen the arrangements for project supervision, direction and leadership, in three main ways:
  - g. Project supervision, direction and policy-setting responsibilities should revert to the small, formal **TPR** (MNE, UNDP, MFE) which should be convened once or twice annually, and its decisions and recommendations conveyed to the PSC and project management. The position of National Project Manager (**NPM**) should be empowered to drive all aspects of project management, in accordance with the Project Document and TPR-approved annual project plans and budgets. Supervision of the project operations and staff, and day-to-day administration responsibilities should be delegated formally to the NPM, who should report to the NPD and TPR.
  - h. The **NPD** and PSC Chair (who has numerous other responsibilities) should be enabled to fulfil his second, pivotal function outlined above more pro-actively (i.e. policy and institutional linkage between ASP, MNE and GoM), by working primarily as the principal strategist with the PSC, guiding the integrity of the project in line with the revised project plan and logical framework. The NPD should delegate all day-to-day management and administration to the NPM.
  - i. The **PSC** (whose members are busy people) should be asked to concentrate more fully on its primary, "outwards" set of responsibilities outlined above, to focus the PSC agenda on the key strategic, policy and program issues concerning conservation, NRM and sustainable development. The PSC should <u>not</u> be involved in project supervision, work plan and budget approval, staffing, administrative matters, etc.

# 8.5.4 Project delivery

40. Over the past four years (2005-2008), MNE and UNDP<sup>37</sup> between them have contracted a team of project staff who have established, furnished and equipped a main office – initially in Khovd *aimag* centre, recently re-located to Ulan Bataar – and four project field offices (Project Implementation Unit) in the target *aimag* centres of Khovd, Uvs, Bayan Olgii and Khovsgol. Project implementation is led by a National Project Manager and the four PIU Coordinators. The main field staff are called Social Mobilisers and are based at the centres of the project's target *soum*, each working alone from a home office and equipped (since 2007) with a motorbike.

# 8.5.5 Project staff

41. The staff complement at the time of the MTE was as noted in **table 3**, with a total of 47 full-time positions including 5 current vacancies, distributed between one main office, the four target *aimag* centres, and 20 target *soum* centres. This staff complement is in accordance with the Project Brief, apart from the following: neither of the UNVs has been appointed; and two additional *soum* joined the project in 2007, bringing the total to 20 Social Mobilisers. Since the project was designed 6 years ago, there does not appear

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> All staff are contracted by MNE, apart from the National Project Manager and the Finance Officer, both of whom have direct contracts with UNDP Mongolia.

to have been any critical review or adjustment made to the project staff complement, apart from a few individual changes made in2007.

Office	Position		
Main Project Office			
	National Project Manager (started November 2008)		
	Administrator		
	Finance Officer		
	International Technical Advisor (vacant since June 2008)		
	Community Empowerment & Development Officer (started May 2008)		
	Research Officer (vacant)		
	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer (started November 2008)		
	Interpreter – translator (vacant)		
	Drivers (2)		
Aimag Proje	ect Implementation Units (4)		
	PIU Coordinator (4)		
	Community Empowerment & Development Officer (4)		
	Administration & Finance Assistant (4)		
	Drivers (4)		
	International UNV on Research (vacant)		
	International UNV on CBNRM (vacant)		
Soum home-offices (20)			
	Social Mobiliser (20)		

 Table 3: Project staff complement, November 2008

- 42. MTE recommendation (6.1) is for the project staff complement and position descriptions to be reviewed by the NPM, in conjunction with clarifying the project's main Component Outcomes and strategies and Output objectives (recommendations 1 and 2) and confirming the project plan and budget for the remaining duration (recommendation 8). The composition of the project team should be revised to ensure that the planned strategies will be well-led and the re-confirmed objectives can be met. Consideration should be given to the following suggestions from the MTE:
  - g. Delegate increased authority to the NPM, and strengthen a project senior executive group comprising the NPM and the 4 PIU Coordinators with greater direct responsibilities for project strategy, supervision and management.
  - h. Strengthen the project team in the area of <u>policy</u>, <u>institutional and legislative</u> (<u>PIL</u>) <u>development</u> (current Output 1). This could be done by assigning lead responsibility for PIL work to the NPM (national PIL) and four Coordinators (PIL work in each *aimag*). These project staff should work in close collaboration with their official counterparts in each government. Short-term PIL experts should be contracted to support strong implementation of this component.
  - i. Strengthen the project team in the area of <u>natural resource management planning</u> <u>and action</u> (CB+INRM: community-based, collaborative and integrated/ intersectoral), to deliver current Outputs 3 and 5 more effectively. This could be done by changing the role of the main office CEDO into the project's lead expert on introducing CB+ INRM; revising the ToR of the 4 *aimag* CEDOs and the 20 SMs; and substantially extending the range of activities and capacities of this

main corps of field staff. Rather than working individually in isolation, these 24 staff should also form sub-teams to work together more intensely and introduce CB+INRM sequentially in selected *soums*.

- j. Re-define the role of the M&E officer to strengthen and integrate all aspects of the project's management of <u>Information</u>, <u>Research</u>, <u>M&E</u>, and <u>Communications</u>.
- k. The positions of Research Officer and UNV for research should not be filled. Most future "research work" by the project should be organised as "participatory action research", undertaken directly by local community groups and individuals, and facilitated by the above CB+INRM teams. The amount of future specialised research requiring outside experts should be reduced significantly, and simply sub-contracted to an appropriate research NGO or institution.
- The position of ITA should not be refilled. As suggested above, it is more important and relevant to strengthen the roles and technical capacities of the main full-time project staff, especially the NPM, PIU Coordinators, revised-CEDOs and revised-M&E officer. Funds available should be used to hire series of shortterm technical advisors as required.

## 8.5.5.1 Human resource management

- 43. A number of issues concerning staff employment conditions were noted during the MTE mission, which in total appear to have had an impact over the four years to date on individuals' morale, satisfaction and performance. The MTE notes also that there have been recent improvements made to some employment conditions<sup>38</sup> but not all issues have been addressed. There have been some general frustrations with the management and leadership of the project and with the roles and tasks staff are to perform. Decisionmaking appears to have been inflexible and top-down in style rather than collegial. The ASP staff are in a similar position to other "project staff": not attached properly to any permanent institution; not employees but short term contract workers. There is widespread dissatisfaction with the rates of pay, DSA rates, and the policy of not paying employment insurance (pension) or health insurance. There have been a disconcerting number of NPMs and other staff whose tenure has been short-lived. Another indication of a lack of regard for the project and its staff – perhaps its most important asset – is the quality of the workplace facilities provided. It seems likely that the poor conditions and the invidious policy of one-year contracting are deterring some high quality candidates from applying for positions with the project. The MTE considers these factors to be more serious than the reported preference to be based in Ulan Bataar rather than an *aimag* centre
- 44. **Recommendation (6.2)** is for staff employment conditions to be reviewed carefully (by a 3-person team from the ASP, MNE and UNDP, tasked to report back to the TPR within 2 months with costed proposals to address all outstanding issues raised by staff). MNE and UNDP are urged to take a flexible approach to implementing the proposals and putting in place a package of conditions (pay, DSA, insurance, workplace standards, roles and responsibilities) that will attract, retain and motivate good quality staff. For example, there does not seem to be any justification for one-year contracts when UNDP already holds the funds for the full duration of the project. One specific suggestion is to introduce a grading system to some job positions (such as the SMs), which are already

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> In 2007 and 2008, some job descriptions were revised; the overall team composition was strengthened; pay rates and equipment were improved.

filled by individuals on a standard low base salary. Higher performance could be rewarded by a move up to a higher grade in the same position.

45. As noted above, the project staff are perhaps its most important asset, in which it has already made an investment. There has been a variety of on-the-job training provided to staff members but this has been relatively piecemeal and narrowly project-oriented. A related, broader concern of the MTE is for the project and MNE to plan for the "institutionalisation" of key project staff functions: there appears to be no clear vision for the institutional arrangements that should be put in place by or before the end of the project, in order to ensure that an effective conservation system for the Altai Sayan regions will be supported by an appropriate long-term institution. This question is key for the project staff, at least some of whom should be able to look forward to continuing in similar jobs in conservation in the region, from a more secure institutional base. MTE **recommendation (6.3)** is for project management for all interested staff members over the life of the project.

8.5.6 Project implementation approach	
Rating: Implementation approach	HS - S - MS - U

- 46. Implementation of the AS project was started in 2004-05 using funds from UNDP and the Dutch Government, but a formal launch and inception exercise were organised only in early 2007 when GEF funds became available. The approach followed by the project to date has been organised around preparation and subsequent execution of a detailed Work plan and budget (WPB). The WPB is prepared annually and quarterly by the main project office (NPM and staff) from inputs proposed by the four *aimag* PIU teams; submitted to MNE, UNDP CO and the PSC for approval; and then carried out and reported against by the project team. Funds are released quarterly by UNDP CO on receipt of quarterly reports on progress and expenditure, and of the plan and budget for the next quarter's activities. All activities and expenditure have been organised directly by the project staff or on the project's behalf by UNDP CO (for example for purchase of items of equipment or consultancies).
- 47. The WPB is a detailed schedule of activities and cost items under each of the 6 planned "Outputs". The structure of the 2008 WPB is summarised in table 4, and indicates that it was based on the project logical framework but incorporates a number of changes and considerably more detail. In the 2008 WPB, the 6 LF Outputs are re-phrased as "Outcomes", and a new series of 23 "Outputs" has been generated. These have been sub-divided into 44 Activities; 94 Sub-Activities; 177 "Details" and >300 budgetary "line items".

Objective level	No. Items		
"Outcomes"	6		
"Outputs"	23		
"Activities"	44		
Sub-Activities	94		
Sub-Activity Details	177		

## Table 4: Structure of the ASP 2008 Work Plan

Sub-Details/ Line items >300

- 48. It is a concern for the MTE that this highly-detailed Work plan and budget seems to be the only planning, management and monitoring tool used by the ASP management. The WPB may be useful for detailed monitoring of expenditure, but is of little use for the strategic management of the project or its budget, towards achieving the required results. The project's reliance solely on an unwieldy WPB is likely to make implementation inefficient. In the absence of any broader plan or monitoring framework, there must be a tendency for all those supervising and directing the project (PSC, UNDP, NPD, NPM) to become pre-occupied with micro-managing very low levels of activity and very small amounts of funds.
- 49. Unfortunately, the project logical framework itself has not been developed or adapted over the past 4-6 years beyond the 6 major "LF Outputs" ("WPB Outcomes"), and so remains of little use to project management. Unfortunately too, the 23 additional "Outputs" in the WPB are likewise not well formulated (see table 5): there are too many in total for efficient management, and they are not framed at a consistent middle-level; some are relatively minor parts of activities, too narrowly sub-divided, while others are significant outputs; most refer to processes rather than to results; few are written as SMART, focused objectives.
- 50. As stressed in the section above on the project logical framework refer to recommendations 1 and 2 it is crucial to formulate a coherent, clear and consistent set of planned Outputs at the key, mid-level of the project's logical hierarchy, and then to carefully plan the project, organise management and administration, and monitor the achievement of results, based on the set of Outputs. It would be valuable to allocate responsibility for each specific revised Output to an individual project team member or sub-team; and then to formulate and execute a small action plan for each Output. A series of tools for project management are recommended in table 6, to be developed based on the revised logical framework.

#### Table 5: ASP planned "Outputs" developed in Work Plan and Budget for 2008

OUTCOME 1 "Biodiversity conservation is a routine consideration in productive sector institutions, policies and practices"

Output 1. Define proper ways to sustain *aimag* Sustainable Development and develop recommendation on developing *aimag* and *soum* land use plans

Output 2. Recommendations for improved policies and practices with respect to mountain biodiversity conservation in rural livelihoods and economic development

Output 3. Demonstrated inter-sectoral coordination in implementation of environmental policy and law enforcement

Output 4. Economic analysis of the costs and benefits of mountain biodiversity conservation in the region and the economic and environmental costs and benefits of alternative and diversified livelihood options for herders in the region

Output 5. Innovative approaches to public information and involvement in mountain biodiversity conservation

Output 6. Technical input to development of mountain biodiversity conservation components in national school curriculum

Output 7. Two environmental education centers carrying out innovative programmes that further mountain biodiversity conservation

OUTCOME 2 "Accurate and reliable information on biodiversity and ecological processes published, shared and incorporated into decision making by government, developers, herder groups and individual members of the public"

Output 8. Data required for the policy review (Outcome 1), Landscape planning (Outcome3) and project monitoring (Outcome 6)

Output 9. Information data sharing mechanism in 3 levels: government officials and developers, herders and herder groups, and individual members of the public including students.

Output 10. Four monitoring programmes operated by local residents. To include measures of rangeland health, forest health, wild animal abundance and diversity

# OUTCOME 3 "Conservation management expanded from the protected area level to the landscape level "

Output 11. Landscape Conservation Plans for the Altai Arc and Sayan basin are prepared, approved and under implementation

Output 12. Conservation plans for flagship species prepared, approved, under implementation

Output 13. Landscape and species conservation plans are reflected in Land use and protected area management plans

Output 14. Strengthen current agreements on grazing and forest use within Pas by working with PAA and herders to establish Community conservation agreements in order to define responsibilities, penalties and duties

Output 15. Incorporate principles of Landscape ecology into the PAA national training program

**OUTCOME 4: "Joint trans-boundary conservation action and exchange of information on biodiversity conservation is routine"** 

Output 16. Actions taken under international agreements re. conservation of biodiversity

Output 17. China included in routine discussions of Altai Sayan region biodiversity conservation

Output 18. Information exchanged on AS biodiversity with Russia, Kazakhstan and China

**OUTCOME 5:** "Policies and practices related to livelihoods and economic development based on grassland, forest and mountain resources take into account the need to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem processes"

Output 19.Establish model of formal and or informal herder communities in eight pilot areas and support in developing co-management agreements

Output 20. Demonstrate community based pasture management and livelihood in selected 4 areas as a model (out of the selected above)

Output 21. Demonstrate community based wildlife management and livelihood

Output 22. Demonstrate community based forest management and livelihood

OUTCOME 6 "Project monitored well, lessons evaluated and failures and successes publicized so that others can benefit from the project's experience"

Output 23. Work plans and its implementation that target the objective and outcomes accurately

Table manac	6: Recommended actions to develop the main tools for project mement (based on the revised LF)			
Project Outputs Budget Plan and Expenditure Record				
	Prepare summary budget plan for each Output each Quarter, for the remainder of the project life.			
	Monitor and record expenditure under each Output each Quarter. Adjust Budget Plan as required at the end of each year.			
Rolling A	Rolling Annual Plan – Project Implementation and Budget			
	Using the Project Outputs Budget Plan (1.), prepare a Project Implementation and Budget Plan for the year ahead.			
	For each Quarter in the year ahead, specify the <u>main</u> Actions planned under each Output, and their estimated costs.			
	Specify the location(s) and lead staff for each main Action.			
System fo	or Project Monitoring, Information, Reporting, Evaluation (M.I.R.E.)			
	Organise systematic data-collection (primarily by staff) and a simple information management system to record information on the status of each of the logical framework objectives, Indicators, MoMs, and Risks over the life of the project.			
	Retrieve information from the record system as required, to compile routine and special reports, communications, reviews, analyses and evaluations.			
Progress	Reports – Technical and Financial			
	Senior/ lead staff should prepare a succinct report on substantive progress and expenditure under each Component (and Output if justified) before the end of each Quarter, structured on the annual Project Implementation and Budget Plan (2.).			
	Reports should focus on results, issues and lessons rather than activities.			
	NPM should compile a succinct Project Progress Report each Quarter, based on the 3-5 Component Reports, summarising substantive progress and expenditure against the LF Outputs and Budget Plan.			

#### 8.5.7 Adaptive management

- 51. Project implementation has been administered through the annual Work plan and budget (WPB), and any "adaptive management" of the project has been based on comparing the end-of-year report on activities and expenditure against the WPB; i.e. adjustments are included in the next year's WPB. Again, the lack of a useful logical framework specifying the key set of mid-level, multi-year Outputs has hindered introduction of a systematic strategy for adaptive management. It is notable that up to the time of the MTE, the project's logical framework had not been "adapted" into a form that is useful for management or supervision, or used by the project staff as the principal guide for project planning, implementation or monitoring.
- 52. The MTE notes also that the ASP's confused start, in 2005 and 2007, contributed to the poor organisation of adaptive management. "Inception" of the project was not organised until 2007, by which time project implementation had been under way for two years, but without having had a proper inception phase. For a large, complex project, it is good practice to initiate implementation (and the systematic approach of adaptive management) with a rigorous **inception phase**, during which key tasks should be completed, including (a) developing the LF into a useful, up-to-date form; (b) devising the project's monitoring, information, reporting and evaluation (MIRE) system (based on

the revised LF); (c) organising the main tools for project implementation and administration (**table 6**), based on the revised LF; and (d) starting to develop the required capacities of the new project team. It is apparent that for the ASP, besides being two years overdue, "inception" was limited to a formal project "launch" plus confirmation of the administrative procedures to be followed.

## 8.5.8 Project finances

## 8.5.8.1 Budget

- 53. The Altai Sayan Project was planned for a duration of 5 years, with an overall budget of \$11 million. The multiple source s and their contributions to the budget are listed in table 7. GEF financing comprises \$2.72 m, 24% of the total, and co-financing amounts to \$8.52 m, 76% of the total. The project document and budget plan make a further distinction between the funds that are to be managed by the UNDP Mongolia Country Office, a total of \$4.83 m (43% of the total) from GEF, the Dutch Government and UNDP itself; and those that will be managed separately by partner agencies. These include a combined commitment of \$2.4 m (21%) from the two key GoM Ministries (MNE and MFAg), \$1.5 m (13%) from WWF Mongolia, \$1.73 (15%) from ADB, and \$0.75 m (7%) from IFAD.
- 54. In reality, the Altai Sayan project as planned and implemented covers only the \$4.83 m of funds, less than \$1 m per year, that were placed under the management of the UNDP CO. Importantly, this includes the Dutch Government's contribution as well as UNDP's and the GEF's. Thus, for the purposes of this evaluation, the Altai Sayan Project is considered to be only the activities funded by the GEF, UNDP and Dutch Government, rather than the broader package with \$11.24 m funding.
- 55. The activities planned for the Altai Sayan by the other "co-financing" agencies are not included in the AS project document, project logical framework or work program, and their funds are not accounted for by the project. While this is the standard practice for GEF project co-financing, it is unsatisfactory, as it means that there is no common platform for planning, managing, reporting or evaluating the efforts of the various agencies to strengthen conservation and sustainable development in the Altai Sayan region. It is apparent from the project's progress reports and the MTE mission that the AS project and the other agencies' projects and activities have little or no connection with one another. This issue is raised also in the MTE report section above concerning the need for a concerted programmatic approach.

2000)	
Funding source	Funding commitment
US\$ million	ns
GEF	2.72
UNDP (TRAC) <sup>39</sup>	0.24
Dutch Government <sup>10</sup>	1.87
Total UNDP-managed funds	4.83
WWF <sup>40</sup>	1.50

# Table 7: Project funding sources and contributions (Project Document,2006)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Cash co-financing (UNDP-managed)

Cash co-financing (partner-managed)

ADB <sup>11</sup>	1.73	
Ministry of Nature and Environment <sup>11</sup>	0.83	
Ministry of Food and Agriculture <sup>11</sup>	1.60	
IFAD <sup>11</sup>	0.75	
Total partner-managed funds		6.41
Total Project funds		11.24

- 56. A portion of the GEF funds was used by UNDP and GoM to organise a project formulation exercise in the period 2000 to 2002, and to prepare the Project Brief. The Dutch Government approved a project plan and financing in November 2004, and disbursed funds to UNDP for the project commencing in early 2005. Apparently UNDP's own disbursements commenced in 2004, prior to either Dutch funding or GEF approval. The GEF approved the project only in late 2006, and disbursed its first funds to UNDP only in February 2007. These different approval and disbursement dates by the three agencies resulted in a highly staggered start to the project, which was inefficient and ineffective. The full budget became available only at the start of 2007, but by then 44% of the Dutch Government funds and 101% of the UNDP funds had been disbursed.
- 57. The MTE notes that this confused start to the project and fund disbursements is not reflected in the formal Project Document agreement that was signed by the Government of Mongolia and UNDP in December 2006, with the Project Brief (dated 2004) attached as the main annex A. The Project Document specifies the project period as 2007 to 2011, and includes a detailed "Total Project Work Plan and Budget" showing the planned project costs over this period. The funding to be made available by the three donor agencies each year from 2007 to 2011 was as summarised in **table 8**, with no indication that some of the Dutch Government and UNDP funds (amounting together to over 20% of the total budget) had already been disbursed and spent by the project in 2005 and 2006.

Source US\$	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Totals
Dutch Government	0	311,201	435,217	456,307	382,749	280,198	1,865,672
UNDP	25,348	26,812	42,400	42,400	31,400	31,640	200,000
GEF	0	318,650	684,650	666,000	572,600	478,100	2,720,000
Totals	25,348	656,663	1,162,267	1,164,707	986,749	789,938	4,785,672

 Table 8: Project Budget – Summary of Funds, Project Document (2006)

58. Table 9 includes a summary of the budgetary allocations to each of the 6 planned Outputs. Major portions of the funds are allocated to Output 3, Landscape-based conservation (\$1.34 m, 28%) and Output 5, Conservation and livelihoods (\$1.35 m, 28%). Significant funding is allocated to planned Output 6, Project monitoring, evaluation & adaptive management (\$0.85 m, 18%), and Output 2, Information management (\$0.61 m, 13%). Relatively minor allocations are made to Output 1, Institutional & policy development (\$0.43 m, 9%) and Output 4, Trans-boundary conservation (\$0.2 m, 4%).

#### Table 9: Budget allocations to planned Outputs

Planned Output

**Budget contribution** 

	US\$	GEF	Dutch	UNDP	Totals	%
0.1	Institutions & policy development	385,000	49,875	0	434,875	9
0.2	Information management	525,000	89,250	0	614,250	13
0.3	Landscape-based conservation	1,280,000	63,000	0	1,343,000	28
0.4	Trans-boundary conservation	130,000	15,750	50,000	195,750	4
0.5	Conservation and livelihoods	105,000	1,143,450	100,000	1,348,450	28
0.6	Project management, m&e	295,000	504,347	50,000	849,347	18
	Totals	2,720,000	1,865,672	200,000	4,785,672	100
	%	57	39	4	100	

- 59. Overall, the GEF's contribution is 57% of the budget, the Dutch Government's is 39% and UNDP's is 4%. As illustrated in **chart 1**, the contribution from each of the three sources of funding was earmarked to specific portions of the project rather than to an integrated budget. Most notably, Outputs 1, 2 and 3 were to be funded primarily by the GEF (89%, 85% and 95% respectively), while the bulk of the funding (85%) for Output 5 was to be provided by the Dutch Government. A surprising proportion (59%) of the funding for Output 6 was also earmarked to the Dutch Government. The Project Document specifies further that "The costs of programme staff will be shared between GEF, Dutch Government and UNDP. (Main office and support staff) will be funded by GEF. Funding for (*aimag* PIU staff) will be from the Dutch Government."
- 60. The MTE considers that such earmarking of the project budget is not appropriate, as it presents a potential complication for management. The project and budget are designed as an integral package, which would be ineffective if implemented in separate or unsynchronised portions. Similarly, the project staff complement is planned as a complete team, not two half teams. Each donor should be contributing to the overall package and team, and interested in the results and impacts achieved by the whole project. The MTE considers that it is fortunate that this integration is what has occurred in practice with the AS Project, even though there was a gap of two years between funds becoming available from the three donors.

# Chart 1: Budget allocations to Outputs, by donor



# 8.5.8.2 *Project expenditure, 2004-05 to 2008*

61. As noted above, the AS project had a highly staggered start, with Dutch Government and UNDP funding being available in 2004 and 2005, prior to the project being approved by the GEF, and GEF funds being available only from early 2007. Expenditure data provided to the MTE is summarised in **table 10**. It indicates that total expenditure to date, from 2004 to October 2008, has been \$2.08 million, 44% of the overall budget. Expenditure was low in 2004 and 2005, increased to \$0.66 m in 2006 and \$0.67 m in 2007, then decreased again in 2008 to \$0.39 m (not including November and December expenditure). If the duration of implementation (2004 to October 2008) is considered to be four years, average annual expenditure has equalled \$0.52 m, not much more than half of the planned expenditure of \$0.96 m per year.

				,				
Pr	oject Expenditure US\$	2004-05 <sup>41</sup>	2006	2007	2008	Totals	%	Balance
O	utputs				Jan-Oct	to date		
1	Institution & policy dev.	31,667	25,780	49,787	26,827	134,061	31	300,814
2	Information mgt.	4,986	53,050	37,957	16,835	112,828	18	501,422
3	Landscape con.	77,484	139,307	161,883	105,440	484,114	36	858,886
4	Trans-boundary con.	1,240	11,827	13,494	7,029	33,590	17	162,160
5	Livelihoods	16,730	204,336	153,185	21,662	395,913	29	952,537
6	M&E, project mgt.	231,553	221,303	257,471	212,909	923,236	109	-73,889
	Totals	363,660	655,603	673,777	390,702	2,083,742	44	2,701,930

## Table 10: Project Expenditure by Output, 2004-05 to October 2008

62. If all had gone according to the original plan, after 4 years of the 5-year project, expenditure on each Output should have been roughly 80%. In practice, reported expenditure has been slow and uneven across the five substantive project Outputs (1. to 5.), as illustrated in **chart 2:** only 17-18% of the planned budgets for Outputs 2 and 4

41

Expenditure in 2004 was relatively minor and is combined with 2005 in this table.

have been disbursed; and 29-36% of the budgets for Outputs 1, 3 and 5. In contrast, the budget for Output 6 has been overspent, with 109% of the funds disbursed by October 2008.



Chart 2: Outputs budget and expenditure, 2004-05 to 2008

- 63. The MTE considers that the principal cause of the under-expenditure on the substantive Outputs 1 to 5, and over-expenditure on Output 6 has been the unclear specification of each of the project's component objectives, in the Project Document and logical framework. As a result of the substantive project components not being clearly developed, expenditure items have not been attributed properly to each component. Instead, the easier option has been followed, of lumping together virtually all expenditure on "project management activities" under Output 6. Thus staff costs and operating costs have been recorded under Output 6, whereas they should have been recorded against the Output(s) to which the activity was contributing. Only a small core of general management actions should be accounted for under Output 6.
- 64. The lesson that may be drawn is that during the project planning and design process, and through subsequent revisions of the implementation plan (adaptive management), the nature of each component and Output should be developed very clearly. This would enable the anticipated costs of achieving each Output to be estimated more thoroughly, and the budget to be allocated accordingly across the Outputs. Refer also to the discussion in the section on Project Design above.
- 65. MTE **recommendation** (7) is for the project management to prepare, use, monitor and report against a fresh Outputs budget, for each financial quarter and year, for the remainder of the project. This should be based on the revised hierarchy of Outcome and Output objectives (refer to **recommendation** (1)). All anticipated costs of achieving each substantive Output (including a share of "project management costs") should be included in the budget for each Output, and subsequently all relevant expenditure should be recorded under that Output . This will assist in proactively managing the budget and in implementing each Output more rigorously.

66. The MTE was advised that, as only the Dutch Government and UNDP funds were available in 2005 and 2006, they were used across all components of the project, and not in accordance with the donors' intentions to support specific outputs only. Apparently the Dutch Government questioned this practice, but presumably the UNDP CO advised that it was impracticable for the budget to be managed in any other way, given the fact that the GEF funding did not commence until two years after the Dutch Government and UNDP. However, given the other effects of the staggered start on the project's inception and implementation, the MTE considers that it would have been prudent to have postponed the start until all donors' funds were available, and then to have launched and implemented the project in a fully concerted manner.

#### **8.5.9** Project duration

- 67. The staggered start by the three donors has led to confusion over the duration of the project. For the Dutch Government and UNDP, the project started around the beginning of 2005, and therefore may be considered to be closing at the end of 2009, with all "their" funds spent. As the GEF funding commenced in 2007, the planned 5-year period may be considered to be ending in 2011, apart from the fact that over 20% of the total budget had been spent by the start of 2007. Clearly it is important for this question to be resolved and a new timetable for the remainder of the project to be set and agreed by the parties.
- 68. Taking into account the balance of funds available (56% of the original combined budget), the need to clarify, focus and simplify the project plan, and the need to allow sufficient time for the project to achieve the major part of its planned objectives, recommendation (8) from the MTE is to extend the duration of the AS project, provisionally to the end of 2012. It is important for the revised duration to apply to the project as a whole and for each of the supporting parties the Dutch Government, UNDP and GEF as well as GoM to accept and approve the proposed arrangement. The no-cost extension period should be confirmed following the MTE, by preparing and approving a fresh project implementation plan for this period, specifying the revised Outputs to be achieved and the quarterly Output budget requirements.

8.5.10 Monitoring and evaluation	
Rating: Monitoring & evaluation	HS - S - MS - U

- 69. Section 13. of the Project Brief describes what it refers to as a "comprehensive monitoring and evaluation program included in its overall design." Two distinct foci for M&E are specified, towards (a) the condition of the project area's biodiversity and socio-economic development; and (b) the project's progress.
- 70. <u>M&E of biodiversity and socio-economic development</u>: The M&E program described in the Project Brief is aimed primarily at measuring changes in the biodiversity and socio-economic circumstances in the Altai Sayan region. Considerable emphasis is placed on confirming the "information baseline" at the outset of the project, on determining specific indicators, and on conducting periodic surveys to determine "changes in conditions in the biological, ecological and economic arenas". A number of substantive measures are described in the M&E plan, including:

- a. biodiversity condition/ health.
- b. ecosystem integrity and function.
- c. size and condition of key habitats; richness of habitat mosaic.
- d. population size of indicator species (including those sensitive to increased fishing or collecting).
- e. socio-economic conditions of "local communities around site areas"; current income levels.
- f. sustainable use, e.g. of grassland and wildlife resources.
- g. attitude and awareness surveys of key stakeholder groups ("from top-level policy makers to local level stakeholders").
- h. strengthened capacity...
- 71. It is apparent that at the time of the MTE, surveys to establish the "baseline" were not complete, and critical indicators had not been defined. Thus it was not possible to confirm whether or not the populations of key wildlife species had increased; the condition of pasture or forest had improved; the income of herder households had risen or had become more diverse; or the capacity of a government office or community organisation had been strengthened. Even if changes in parameters such as these had been detected, it would not be feasible to attribute them with any certainty to the AS project.
- 72. The MTE notes that during project implementation, considerable attention has been given to the populations of "key stone species" in the Altai and Sayan regions. For example, the majority of project-commissioned studies described to the MTE appeared to be surveys of numbers and distribution of ibex, argali or snow leopards. Such an emphasis seems unnecessary and inappropriate. The project needs to monitor the direct results and impacts achieved by the project, not the possible long-term outcomes to which the project may have made a contribution. It is important to note that, of the 40+ indicators defined in the project logical framework, only one or two are measures of wildlife populations, and these should be used only to indicate progress towards the overall goal. The undue emphasis on wildlife research studies is discussed further in the Results achieved section below, under Output 2 concerned with information and awareness.
- 73. <u>M&E of Project progress:</u> Responsibility for managing and directing the Altai Sayan Project lies with the NPM, to whom the project staff report, and the NPD, a senior official of MNE, who works in conjunction with the TPR, on which UNDP Mongolia is a member. For project M&E purposes, progress with implementation is recorded by means of quarterly and annual activity and expenditure reports, prepared by the NPM and staff, and submitted to the NPD, TPR and PSC. Such reports have been produced for each year of the AS project to date. In addition, the UNDP CO and MNE have organised periodic joint inspection missions to project field sites. The ProDoc specifies a number of additional M&E measures, including (a) annual external evaluations for the project's lifetime; (b) annual participatory evaluation exercises with key stakeholders (local communities, NGOs and partner organizations); and (c) annual inputs by an adaptive management advisor. These additional measures do not seem to have been in operation.

- 74. Although the project has generated numerous periodic reports, it is not clear what analysis or evaluation of the contents have been carried out by oversight bodies. No systematic feedback appears to have been given to project management or staff. As noted elsewhere, planning, implementation and monitoring of the ASP have not been straightforward, both because of the staggered start to project approvals and disbursements by the three contributing donors, and because the staggered start was not reflected in the project work plan and budget plan. However, there does not appear to have been any comment on these discrepancies by the NPD, TPR or PSC, or feedback to the project management suggesting adjustments to the budget, logical framework or future work plans.
- 75. From the ProDoc, it is clear that the project's **logical framework** is intended to serve as the principal tool for both of these aspects of M&E, the substantive biodiversity and socio-economic, and the performance of the project itself. This is good management practice, but depends upon the preparation and development of a good quality logical framework, (objectives, indicators, targets, milestones and risks). Unfortunately this is not the case for ASP; the MTE notes that the ASP logical framework poses a number of problems for effective and efficient M&E: the LF objectives and indicators are not sufficiently focused or precise; some of the objectives and indicators are mis-guided and inappropriate. The MTE considers that the poor quality of the ASP logical framework has inhibited development of a sound M&E program. The Mid-Term Evaluation itself was constrained by the poorly-developed project plan and LF. As specified in the ProDoc, both of the independent evaluations (the MTE and Final Evaluation) "will (aim to) match project progress against predetermined success indicators."
- 76. The MTE's overall rating of the ASP's monitoring and evaluation is "marginally satisfactory". It is recommended (9) that following the MTE, the project's M&E program should be re-planned based on a more systematic and pragmatic approach. The steps to be taken are as recommended for re-development of the logical framework: confirm the main logical hierarchy of objectives, especially the critical middle-level Outputs; devise 2-3 SMART indicators for each of the middle- and high-level objectives; base the project's monitoring information reporting evaluation system firmly on these indicators.

8.5.11 Stakeholder participation	
Rating: Stakeholder participation in implementation	HS - S - MS - U

77. The Altai Sayan Project is implemented at a full range of political levels, from international and national, to *aimag, soum* and local. **Table 11** summarises the main groups of stakeholders relevant to the project at each level. A key consideration for the project's efficiency and effectiveness at each of these levels is the degree to which stakeholders are participating in the substantive work of the project.

Political level Stakeholders relevant to ASP			
International	•	Government officials in Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan and	

# Table 11: Altai Sayan Project – relevant stakeholders
	China		
	Counterpart managers in Altai Sayan eco-region programs		
National	<ul> <li>National politicians; representatives of A-S electorates</li> </ul>		
•	<ul> <li>National government officials – policy makers and planners in MNE, MFE, MFAg, M.Industry</li> </ul>		
•	<ul> <li>Private sector company directors</li> </ul>		
•	Finance institutions (banks)		
•	<ul> <li>Offices of international aid agencies</li> </ul>		
•	NGO directors		
	Other projects		
Aimag and  • Regional development planners			
Altai-Sayan 🛛	<ul> <li>Aimag governors and members of parliament</li> </ul>		
• Aimag officials – in NRM (agriculture, land, water, envt.,			
(Bayan-Olgii, wildlife)			
Khovd, Uvs,  • Private sector (inc. banks) managers			
Khovsgol)	NGO managers		
•	Schools and student groups		
•	• Other projects		
	General public		
<i>Soum</i> and <i>bag</i> •	<ul> <li>Soum governors and members of parliament</li> </ul>		
•	<ul> <li>Soum officials – in NRM (agriculture, land, water, envt., wildlife)</li> </ul>		
	Community-based organisations (CBOs), NGOs, associations		
	Schools and student groups		
•	• Other projects		
	General public		
Local	Households		
•	<ul> <li>Community organisations (CBOs), NGOs, associations</li> </ul>		
•	• Other projects		
	General public		

- 78. Given the extensive range of relevant stakeholders, it is clearly a major challenge for the project to facilitate and ensure adequate degrees of participation. Its efforts have been concentrated primarily at *aimag*, secondarily at local levels, making use of the presence of project units in the four target *aimag* centres and in the 20 target *soum*. From meetings organised for the MTE in Uvs and Khovd *aimag* centres and in a selection of *soum* centres, it is apparent that the Altai Sayan project has become well known in these locations and is actively engaged with the governors and government officials and with local institutions such as schools and NGOs in carrying out project activities. There has been less engagement of the project with national stakeholders or with international counterparts in the countries bordering Mongolia's Altai and Sayan regions.
- 79. Some excellent results have been achieved by the project in its work with local schools and students in supporting eco-clubs and raising awareness about environmental issues. Similarly, "information centres" have been developed in a number of *aimag*, *soum* and *bag* centres and are serving a useful community-strengthening function. The project has also provided direct support to government offices involved in land management, environment, protected areas, agriculture and so on, in each of the target *aimag* and *soum*. Much of this support has been in the form of organising training exercises for staff and in providing them with upgraded equipment, vehicles, uniforms and so on.

- 80. The assessment of the MTE is that these forms of project engagement with key stakeholders at *aimag, soum* and other levels do not amount to adequate stakeholder participation in the project. The Altai Sayan project has a fundamental challenge in that its **core strategy is to build the capacities of the key groups of stakeholders so that they undertake the required conservation and development actions** required to achieve the planned results and outcomes. Thus the role of the ASP staff is not directly to manage natural resources, conserve pasture and forest, develop alternative livelihoods, monitor wildlife, or reform conservation policy and institutions. Rather, the principal task of the project and staff is to <u>facilitate</u> the organisation and implementation of these actions by the various major stakeholders. In this critical way, the project's central purpose is to assist the stakeholders to form and strengthen an effective long-term system for conservation and sustainable development in the Altai Sayan region, rather than believing that the project itself is conserving the wildlife and developing livelihoods.
- 81. To date, the AS project does not appear to have developed the right relationships with the key stakeholder groups, nor to have promoted and enabled them to be the central participants implementing the project agenda. Most of its actions with stakeholders to date appear to have been to hand out equipment, grants and training courses with no clear strategy or innovative system in mind. **Table 12** identifies the key stakeholder groups for each of the ASP's current 5 substantive outputs. MTE **recommendation (10)** is for the project management to make the identified stakeholders the central participants in each of the project components, and to plan and organise project activities so that they are implemented primarily <u>by</u> the participants, with facilitation and assistance from the ASP.
- 82. For example, a priority objective of the project (current Output 1) is to bring about reform of the several government agencies responsible for management and conservation of the environment and natural resources, so that they work in a fully-integrated manner across their "sectors". These reforms are going to require actions <u>by</u> the national, *aimag* and *soum* governments and their planners and policy- and law-makers; and <u>with</u> the support of the ASP, facilitating the drafting of policy papers, and enabling lead agency officials to develop the necessary capacities and work out how they are going to work differently with one another, towards the common objectives of conservation and sustainable use of resources.
- 83. This type of approach, of facilitation and capacity development, needs to be applied to each of the project's outcomes and outputs. Another important example is the local community of herders, who need to be placed at the centre of the proposed planning and introduction of "community-based natural resource management", which should be the cornerstone of the envisaged Altai Sayan conservation strategy. Community members themselves should be the main participants preparing and "owning" the CB NRM plans in each *bag, soum* and *aimag* and subsequently organising NRM actions. The role of the AS project is to facilitate, guide and act as a resource for the community participation process, and this should include assisting and guiding local government officials to develop their capacities to provide their support to the community-centred process.

### Table 12: Key participants in the project's substantive main components

	Substantive components	Key participants		
1.	Institution & policy development	<ul> <li>GoM: MNE and other Ministries – policy and planning staff</li> <li>Aimag and soum governors and government NRM agencies (LMA, PAA, EPA, Agriculture, etc.)</li> <li>Herder community organisations</li> </ul>		
2.	Information management	<ul> <li>Local government</li> <li>NRM agencies</li> <li>Research and educational institutions</li> <li>Community organisations</li> </ul>		
3.	Landscape conservation	<ul><li>NRM agencies</li><li>Herder community organisations</li></ul>		
4.	Trans-boundary conservation	<ul> <li>Government delegates – Mongolia, Russia, China, Kazakhstan</li> <li>NRM agencies</li> <li>Herder community organisations</li> </ul>		
5.	Livelihoods development	<ul> <li>Local governments</li> <li>NRM agencies</li> <li>Herder community organisations</li> <li>Finance institutions</li> <li>Enterprise support agencies.</li> </ul>		

# 8.5.12

## 8.5.13 Sustainability and replication

- 84. Important criteria for project evaluation are the degree to which the conservation system reforms introduced by the project are likely to be <u>sustained</u> beyond the life and budget of the project; and the measures taken by the project to enable the successful aspects of the project initiative to be <u>replicated</u>, beyond the project time-frame, geographic area, or home institutions. The impression gained by the MTE is that to date there has not been sufficient thinking or planning done by project management and staff for sustainability and replication.
- 85. MTE **recommendation** (11) is for the project management to prepare simple strategies for sustainability and replication, as part of re-planning the project logical framework, component strategies, budget and duration, immediately following the MTE. The sustainability strategy should include plans for continuation of each of the key elements of the new conservation system that is to be introduced by the project, i.e. especially the new institution or institutional arrangements for inter-sectoral, inter-agency, collaborative and community-based governance and management of all natural resources in an area. The replication strategy should specify what the project and its key supporting partners are going to do to facilitate extension and establishment of these new measures in new administrative areas (additional *soum, aimags* and regions).

# 8.6 Results Achieved

86. The Altai Sayan project has been under implementation for 4 years prior to the MTE. This section evaluates the achievements to date that were noted by the MTE for each of the 5 substantive components.

Output 1	Institution and policy development	
	Conservation capacity of productive sector institutions and policies is strengthened	
Output 2	Information management	
	Information baseline established and strengthened as basis for integrating conservation into productive sectors	
Output 3	Landscape conservation	
	Landscape-based approach to conservation established and operational	
Output 4	Trans-boundary conservation	
	Strengthened trans-boundary conservation action and institutional linkages	
Output 5	Livelihoods development	
	Grazing, forest-use, sport hunting management, and tourism, are re- oriented to support conservation while improving livelihoods.	

## 8.6.1 Output 1: Institution and policy development

		1
Rating: Results achieved under Outp	ut 1	HS - S - MS - U

- 87. The stated objective is "Conservation capacity of productive sector institutions and policies (is) strengthened". Under this project component, the intention was for the project to work with and strengthen the *aimag* Sustainable Development Councils that were operating at the time of the project's formulation. The SDCs were viewed as potentially the most useful local institution for the project to support, with the aim of ensuring an integrated approach to the governance of natural resources and the environment. The project did some work with the SDCs in 2005 and 2006 but this did not lead anywhere, and the Councils are now defunct. The project commissioned an evaluation of the SDCs in 2007, but the evaluation was not useful.
- 88. Instead of working with the SDCs, the AS project has developed good connections with individual government offices and NGOs active in each of the *aimag* and *soum* in which it is working. It is apparent from the MTE's discussions that the participating *aimag* and *soum* governments are interested in institutional reform towards integration of natural resource management efforts (across land, agriculture, forestry, water, wildlife and environment management "sectors"). However, to date the project has provided little guidance or support towards reforms in this direction. The project appears to have reverted to simply supporting the existing government institutions in their separate activities PAA, EPA, Agriculture, LMA, etc. and its engagement to date has been limited to providing equipment, vehicles, uniforms etc. to government offices, and a variety of technical trainings to each of the agencies.
- 89. The project has been active in supporting institutional development at local community level, by encouraging the formation of Herder Groups, following the introduction of new

regulations by MNE in 2006. To date over 70 HGs have formed in association with the ASP. This is commendable as perhaps the most significant result achieved to date by the project, and is a reflection of the time and energy invested by the main corps of project field staff, the CEDOs and Social Mobilisers. However, based on its observations, the MTE has a serious concern that the Herder Groups being established are not suitable institutions for the project's purpose of facilitating community-based natural resource management.<sup>42</sup> The project seems to have supported implementation of the 2006 MNE regulations in an unquestioning manner, and in the view of the MTE, has been misguided. The main issue is that the HGs are not democratic, inclusive bodies incorporating all stakeholders interested in an area (of land, forest or water). The MNE regulations stipulate only the minimum number of herder households (10) who can form a Group, and then be granted priority use rights and responsibilities over a designated area of land, a maximum of 10,000 hectares. This is not an appropriate basis for equitable, participatory decision-making about the future use and conservation of shared natural resources. (On the other hand, the MTE considers that the Herder Groups established with ASP support could be useful entities for small enterprise development, which is the main interest of some of the HGs that have been formed.)

- 90. There is an outstanding issue for the AS project to advise MNE that its 2006 regulations are not a fully appropriate model and require modifications before being promoted and used further. To date, the project has not worked on reforming national policies or legislation in support of community-based or integrated natural resource management. Important policy actions by the ASP have been only to support conventional <u>land use planning</u> by *aimag* and *soum* agencies, with the aim of incorporating "biodiversity considerations". The project's efforts in this area appear piecemeal rather than systematic, built simply on the existing, separate planning procedures followed by the several Ministries involved (MFAg, MNE, Ministry of Roads, Transportation, Construction and Urban Development). The project is also starting to assist the Protected Areas Administration with developing <u>PA management plans</u> for existing selected PAs in the Altai Sayan regions.
- 91. MTE **recommendation (12)** is for the project management to urgently re-think its strategy for component 1, and to re-define the crucial <u>institution and planning model</u> that the project will develop and use to support (a) appropriate, inclusive herder community institutions; and (b) appropriate, equitable, democratic herder community-based natural resource planning and management procedures, which can be scaled-up from local to regional landscape. The project's work on land-use planning should be adjusted towards <u>reforming</u> the current *aimag* and *soum* agency-led processes, in favour of the ASP model of community-based and integrated NR planning and management.
- 92. The MTE had a number of positive discussions about the value of the ASP helping the herder community *bag* by *bag* to prepare and implement integrated NRM plans, linked within a reformed NRM framework at *soum* and then at *aimag* levels. The advantages of an approach such as this are that it is bottom-up within a guiding framework; it is in line with the principle of empowering the herders themselves to make decisions as a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> The MTE's concerns are borne out by a commissioned study of the project's work with Herder Groups, the results of which were submitted during the MTE by the authors, Community Conservation Network (CoCoNet) of Mongolia.

community about the future use of the natural resources in their area – land, water, pasture, forest, wildlife; it provides for equitable, democratic decision-making by all the herders dependent upon all the resources within the bag; it requires the rights of the herders to access and use local resources to be recognised, and their needs to be taken into account; it emphasises the responsibilities of the various government agencies to work together to support and facilitate integrated NRM decision-making by the herders themselves.

- 93. As soon as practicable, this type of approach should be defined, piloted by the project and then promoted as the ASP model. A significant step must be for the several Ministries involved, especially MNE and MFAg, to endorse the "ASP model" as a <u>whole-of-government policy</u>, and adjust legislation as necessary. This model can then be used to continue the guidance provided to herder communities, *soum* and *aimag* governments, by the AS project and by other agencies and projects.
- 94. In addition to working with the *bag* community of herders on NRM planning and implementation, the project's work with the smaller, ad hoc Herder Groups should also be developed further, but for the distinct purpose of supporting the HGs' efforts to develop resource-based livelihoods and enterprises (current Output 5), which should be done within the context of the properly-instituted CB NRM plans prepared for each *bag*, *soum* and *aimag*. An additional crucial point is that the project's work on policy & institutional developments (current Output 1) <u>must inter-connect closely</u> with its field work on introducing community-based, collaborative and integrated NRM (Output 3). For example, new policies and institutional arrangements can be <u>piloted</u> in the selected *aimag*, *soum* and *bag*; and then used to advise and advocate suitable policy (and legal) changes to support replication of these pilots. Vice versa, a new policy can be drafted by GoM and first "field tested"/ piloted by the project prior to wider adoption<sup>43</sup>.

#### 8.6.2 Output 2: Information management Rating: Results achieved under Output 2

HS - S - MS - U

- 95. The stated objective is "Information baseline established and strengthened as basis for integrating conservation into productive sectors." The project has organised activities in three main directions: (a) commissioning research, especially into the population sizes of the main "landscape" species of wildlife; (b) general environment awareness-raising among the general public and school students in the project *aimags*; and (c) organising information on natural resources and biodiversity so that it is available for decision-making, planning and policy development.
- 96. These activities have produced some good results, particularly in raising awareness about environmental issues in schools and eco-clubs, and in community-strengthening by developing "information centres" in a number of *aimag*, *soum* and *bag* centres. The project has also paid for improved information technology, for surveillance, survey and mapping work especially, in the offices of the land management agency, EPA, PAA, and the Border Protection Unit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> It would have been useful if the MNE had adopted this process and used the ASP to pilot its 2006 Herder Group regulations prior to their general introduction.

- 97. It is important for the project to ensure that information-gathering in each of its various forms is closely and directly linked to the core objective of strengthening an effective conservation system for the Altai Sayan eco-region. While raising public awareness and improving technology available for government planners and inspectors are useful in a general sense, higher priority should be given to <u>enabling the herder community to</u> acquire, access and use information, so that community members themselves can be the central participants in informed decision-making about the future use and conservation of the natural resources in their areas. In addition, rather than acquiring a wide range of general information, it will be more effective to focus on gathering specific information that is needed to address the priority natural resource management issues that are the central concerns of the project and its partners.
- 98. In this regard, the MTE considers that the emphasis placed on strengthening the "information baseline" and developing an information management system is inappropriate. This has given the impression that a key objective of the project is to conduct research and acquire information, especially on the local biodiversity, as though monitoring wildlife is itself a conservation measure. It is much more important for the ASP to support improved natural resource planning and management systems, rather than improved research and information systems. The project should treat research and information gathering as means rather than as justifiable ends. The emphasis should be on assisting local institutions (community and government) to improve their planning and management mechanisms, and one small part of this work should help local groups and offices to collect together data that is essential for reasonably-well-informed decision making. As stressed above under project staffing needs – refer to recommendation 6.2 – "most future research work by the project should be organised as 'participatory action research', i.e. integrated with the planning process undertaken directly by local community groups and individuals. The amount of future specialised research requiring outside experts should be reduced significantly, and simply sub-contracted to an appropriate research institution or NGO.
- 99. MTE **recommendation** (13) is to integrate information-gathering and management with the project's core objective of facilitating community-based and collaborative management of natural resources. This will mean giving priority to the information needs of the local community rather than government, and for tackling resource management issues rather than enhancing general awareness or scientific understanding.

8.6.3 Output 3: Landscape conservation	
Rating: Results achieved under Output 3	HS - S - MS - U

- 100. The objective is "(to established and make operational) a landscape-based approach to conservation". To this end, the project has established its operations in each of the 4 *aimag* that comprise the Altai and Sayan regions, and is conducting pilot activities in 20 selected *soum* across the region. However, the MTE concludes that little progress has been towards establishing a useful system for landscape conservation in the Altai Sayan. The project has been pursuing several, disconnected strategies, including:
  - a. assisting incorporation of biodiversity considerations into land-use planning by the land management agency at *aimag* and *soum* levels

- b. supporting maintenance of existing PAs, and the creation of new formal protected areas under national legislation (for example, the Munkharkhan National Park in Khovd *aimag*)
- c. supporting formation of Herder Groups with an interest in conserving wildlife (and securing hunting fees) in a locally managed area.
- 101. The concern of the MTE is that none of these three approaches is adequately suited to the underlying concept of the AS project, which is to introduce community-based, collaborative and integrated management of natural resources across the landscape of the Altai Sayan regions. None of the three approaches provides a suitable <u>institution and planning model</u> for the project to promote and apply in its target *soum* and *aimags* refer to **recommendation 12**. Approach a. is continuing the existing sectoral and top-down planning process, and approach b. is supporting conventional PA mechanisms, both of which the ASP was intended to <u>reform</u> into an integrated and bottom-up process, rather than perpetuate. Approach c. is promoting a Herder Group model which the MTE finds unsuitable for the purpose of the AS project. These issues are discussed at more length above under component Output 1.
- 102. This key output from the AS project, "a landscape-based approach to conservation", is going to be achieved primarily by means of the project helping to reform and re-develop the policy and institutional framework. For this reason, **recommendation (12)** above addresses the issues observed with both Outputs 1 and 3.

#### 8.6.4 Output 4: Trans-boundary conservation Rating: Results achieved under Output 4

HS - S - MS - U

- 103. The objective under this Output is "Strengthened trans-boundary conservation action and institutional linkages." There have been a few high-level liaison activities of an introductory nature between national government officials, but, understandably at this stage, there have been no solid results achieved in this area to date. The MTE concludes that it will be necessary for the AS project to <u>first</u> make solid progress with devising and piloting a "landscape-based approach to conservation" (Output 3), which is appropriate and effective in the Mongolian Altai and Sayan regions; <u>then</u> to develop a supportive institutional and policy framework (Output 1); <u>prior to</u> demonstrating the pros and cons of the new Mongolian system to counterparts in Russia, Kazakhstan and China; and developing mutually-supportive mechanisms for trans-boundary conservation (this component 4).
- 104. It is apparent that the lack of strategic thinking about a landscape-based approach to conservation and the models that the project will aim to develop and demonstrate is resulting in opportunities for progressing trans-boundary conservation being neglected. Most of the discussion about trans-boundary conservation concerns developing links and complementary management regimes between neighbouring protected areas across the Mongolian borders with Russia and China. However, existing PAs are centred on mountain peaks, which by definition tend to be discrete areas isolated from one another. It would be more effective to develop trans-boundary collaboration based on an <u>integrated catchment management</u> approach. In this way, systematic attention could be paid to the several important catchments and basins in the Altai Sayan eco-region that are shared between Mongolia, China, Russia and Kazakhstan. The Bulgan river that flows

through Bayan-Olgii and Khovd *aimags* into China is just one example of a catchment where the ASP should be following such an approach.

105. As an important interim step while the ASP is developing its strategy towards transboundary conservation, it is **recommended** (14) that a simple routine exchange of project information should be organised as soon as possible between the various conservation and development programs and projects that are active in the different countries in the trans-boundary region. For the ASP, this will require the NPM to establish contact with the respective PMs of other relevant projects, and share copies of translated versions of the ASP annual report. It would be valuable to conduct this interproject liaison activity in conjunction with the collaborative programming proposed under **recommendation** (4).

8.6.5 Output 5: Livelihoods development	
Rating: Results achieved under Output 5	HS - S - MS - U

- 106. The stated objective is for "Grazing, forest-use, sport hunting management, and tourism, (to be) re-oriented to support conservation while improving livelihoods." As noted above under Output 1, the project has achieved a significant result in supporting the formation of over 70 Herder Groups. These HGs provide the project with a sound basis upon which to support livelihoods development. The project has been active in organising business training for members of HGs, in a range of fields, including enterprise development, business financing and product marketing. The project has also handed out a variety of grants and equipment to support the establishment of HG businesses.
- 107. The MTE was informed of the following types of new enterprises being established with project support:
  - craft-ware (felt, leather, timber, rope) production and selling
  - milk products
  - firewood collection and selling
  - hay (and other winter food for livestock) growing and selling
  - vegetable growing and selling
  - sea-buckthorn cultivation for juice production
  - plant nursery for cultivation and selling of seedlings
  - tourism ventures (river kayaking, wildlife watching, guided trekking, ger accommodation).
- 108. The range of activities under this component are commendable and are producing some of the AS project's more tangible benefits. The work has been pushed successfully by the PIU teams, apparently working well together in each of the four *aimags*. The HGs and CBOs visited by the MTE mission were well-motivated and capably organised to achieve the results they were seeking.
- 109. Nevertheless, the MTE considers that the project's support for livelihoods development could be organised and delivered in a more appropriate and effective manner. As with other aspects of the ASP, this component/ Output 5 would be strengthened if it had been better designed and planned, and organised and led more systematically. Work carried out to date seems to have been rather piecemeal or disjointed, with no clear strategy or

coherence across the project, the four *aimags*, 20 *soum* and 70+ Herder Groups. For some of the enterprises started with ASP support, there are doubts about their financial or social sustainability; their replicability as models for other sites or communities; and whether they will be accompanied by any biodiversity conservation benefits.

110. Delivery and impact could be improved if there were clearer <u>objectives</u>; a clear <u>strategy</u> <u>and policies</u> for the project to follow consistently in implementing livelihood support activities; and closer <u>integration</u> of actions under current project Outputs 1, 2, 3 and 5. More specifically, livelihoods development support (LDS) by the ASP (Output 5) must be closely linked to the local community's planning and management of natural resources in a local area (i.e. CB NRM, which <u>should</u> be but, to date, has not been the clear aim of Output 3). The project should follow the underlying "ASP logic", which is outlined in **box 1**.

### Box 1 : Altai Sayan Project – underlying logic

The project is aiming to facilitate introduction of a local system, involving long-term support from government and non-government agencies that will enable the local community:

- a. to prepare and implement management plans for the conservation and sustainable use of local natural resources (CB NRM); and
- b. for individuals and groups within the local community to be able to harvest and use local natural resources, in accordance with the CB NRM plan, in order to develop and sustain their livelihoods and income.
- 111. The project should also ensure that its LDS work is closely integrated with that of other agencies and projects (of which there are several in the project region), so that together they institute and sustain a consistent and appropriate system, with common principles of providing access to credit, technical advice and assistance, and of promoting and facilitating an increasingly diverse range of socially beneficial and environmentally sustainable livelihoods options.
- 112. One example of inappropriate ASP action is its practice of handing out cash grants and/ or equipment (solar panels, generators) to the HGs or CBOs with which the project works. This practice does not meet the criteria of sustainability or replicability. It would be preferable for the ASP and other assistance agents to support a revolving loan scheme, perhaps in conjunction with an existing local finance institution.
- 113. MTE **recommendation (15)** is that the project should consolidate its livelihoods support work, by first planning and then organising a revised strategy (objectives, indicators, principles and procedures) for implementation of this component (current Output 5). Actions that should be considered in the strategy include the following:
  - a. joint LDS programming with other agencies and programs active in AS regions
  - b. livelihoods "options assessments" linked to local (*bag* and *soum*) CB NRM planning
  - c. analysis of environmental sustainability and social costs & benefits built into each livelihoods enterprise initiative
  - d. technical resources for livelihoods developments linked to the "information centres" developed at *bag* and *soum* centres
  - e. revolving loans scheme instituted at *soum* and *aimag* levels.