**Management Response and Tracking Template**

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| **Project PIMS and title:** | UNDP/GEF Project: # 00037324, PIMS Number: 1278 “*In situ* Conservation of Kazakhstan’s Mountain Agro-biodiversity” Project |
| **Type of evaluation (final or mid-term):** | Mid Term  |
| **Date evaluation was completed:** | 15/03/09 |
| **Date of the management response:** |  |

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| **Key recommendations of the MTE/FE report:****(Copy-paste from the MTE/FE report)**  | **Management Response** |
| **Response:****(Fully/partially agree, disagree + justification. Include a separate Annex if necessary)** | **Actions to address the recommendation:****(List new or modified outputs/activities introduced in the log-frame). If no action required, provide justification.** | **Timeframe for implementing modified/new outputs/activities** |
| **Overall Recommendations** |
| 1 The project makes a number of adjustments to the LFM to update the projects results framework in light of experience gained and changing conditions. These do not amount to significant changes (i.e. the outcomes and objective remain the same). The adjustments will be discussed in the main report and documented in a DRAFT LFM included as an annex to the main report. The project and partners (as should all UNDP-GEF projects) agree a simple system to log changes to LFMs. Preferably a header that includes date, “version” and possibly the next PIR report to record the changes (e.g. Project Name LFM/Ver. #/date/date recorded in PIR) | The project uses NA (nature annals) versions represented in the last PIR (Project Implementation Report)  | The PIU (Project Implementation Unit) will be obliged to observe that previous NA copies are to be removed from the system archive in separate file to avoid a mess  | Every three months  |
| 2. The PIU should “pause” consider the revised LFM and the original project objective and produce a revised strategy document (not more than 5-6 pages) that summarizes how the various project outcomes will achieve the project’s objective and embed an adaptive management culture in the project’s approach. Guidelines will be provided in an annex to the main report. It should be noted that this draft strategy document is guide and its purpose is to stimulate the analysis of the project’s intervention in order to identify the critical assumptions and risks and thus develop a spread of interventions and therefore reduce the vulnerability of a narrow strategy – for instance what if the replanting doesn’t work? It is an exercise that is designed to strengthen the project’s adaptive management approach by challenging the assumptions behind the intervention. | The PIU uses NA versions represented in the last PIR. The PIU has no need in short version of strategy for project implementation activities, as it most likely is convenient for external evaluation and monitoring  | The PIU will prepare the revised strategy of the project according to MTE (mid-term evaluation) recommendations | 2009  |
| 3. The project strengthens its adaptive management “framework” as a means to cope with complexities of the system and future uncertainties and to update the project’s strategy in light of lessons learned. An adaptive management “framework” will be provided as an annex to the MTE report | The project used separate approaches of this methodology for updating of some activity directions. In particular, in 2007 it has organized International Conference on genetic conservation aspects, and in 2008-2009 it conducts work on creation of living collection of wild apple and apricot species diversity  | 1. For the purpose of fuller use of adaptive management “framework” PIU will organise internal training on the subject, as well as place a proposal before UNDP concerning organisation of a series of special trainings for project personnel2. The project will engage SPA (special protected areas) personnel of designed area in development of management approaches on the basis of specified methodology  | 4 quarter, 20092010-2011 |
| 4. The key project partners meet and discuss the possible implications of including a third area within the project’s activities. Tarbagatai is an area to the northeast of the Dzhungar and Ile-Alatau National Park. It is proposed as a zapovednik (strict nature reserve) and approximately US$66,000 has been allocated already (from the State budget) to develop a scientific and feasibility study for creating a zapovednik. The wild fruit forests in this area have been found to include stands of trees that have not been subject to genetic ingression from modern cultivated varieties. Any decision should be weighed against the effects of the worsening economic downturn and the impact that this will have upon state budgets and the co-financing commitments as well as the impact of the delays when staring the project on co-financing. It is important that any such additional areas (to the project) do not affect the projects ability to meet the current objective by December 2011 in the Dzhungar and Ile-Alatau National Parks. | Establishment of Tarbagatai reserve is provided by the program of the Government of RK developed for the period till 2010.Agrobio Project considering the value of mountain apple forest population of Tarbagatai mountains recommends to include their most important sites in structure of projected reserve. Predicted term of reserve establishment is 2011, i.e. the year of completion of Agrobio Project realisation. In case of seeking for additional sources of co-financing and, accordingly, prolongation of execution period, Agrobio project without prejudice to formulated project aims and objectives could also carry out corresponding actions for conservation at the third area - Tarbagatai  | UNDP will go into the issue on additional co-financing of works at potential third area with prospective donors and also with executive agency concerning expansion of scope of activity of the project. In case of success, the question on inclusion of the third area and prolongation of project validity term will be put by UNDP before GEF (Governmental Ecological Fund)  | 2009-2011  |
| 5. The project and its partners keep in mind that the objective reflects agrobiodiversity per se, As a result of genetic ingression from commercial orchards, wild apples are probably the most vulnerable and this threat is most extensive and urgent. However, it is important to remember that there are a number of other important wild relatives within the genetic reserves.  | The project considers apple-apricot forests as wild fruit ecosystems where other agro-biodiversity species co-exist along with keystone ones. Complex of measures under the project for keystone species will also automatically promote conservation of other species within these forests. Besides, with a view of conservation of other agro-biodiversity variety, in 2009 the project initiated special action - “Festival of tulips” – with attraction of schoolchildren, educational institutions, NGO (non-governmental organizations), and business organizations  | The project will continue work on mountain agro-biodiversity conservation strategy at technical support of international consultant for genetic resources, as well as will promote Festival of Tulips to get the status of annually held event  | 2009-2011 |
| 6. The PIU engages a substantive short-term consultant to assist with developing various aspects of the genetic reserves and plant genetic conservation per se. The MTE will provide a draft ToR for this consultancy. | Involvement of authoritative consultant will promote identification of activities under the project and introduction of amendments to the developing national forest policy 2020. | 1. Preparation of performance specification and advertising a vacancy for hiring of international technical consultant 2. Signing of the contract with international technical consultant 3. Carrying out of technical evaluation of design works and preparation of recommendations4. Updating of the version of Conservation Strategy prepared by the project and work out of proposals to the Ministry of Agriculture and FHC (Forest and Hunting Committee) for developing Concept of the State Forest Policy till 2020  | May-June 2009completedJuly 2009completedJuly – August 2009completedAugust-October 2009 |
| 7. The Agrobio Project and the UNEP Regional Project meet to discuss ways in which the projects can complement each other particularly in relation to on-farm conservation and genetic reserves and the opportunity to promote sustainable use and Land Races of crop wild relatives in farming systems surrounding the protected areas. The MTE will provide contact details[[1]](#footnote-2) with the UNDP Recovery, Conservation, and Sustainable Use of Georgia’s Agrobiodiversity Project, Project Number UNDP/GEF Project: # 00037324, PIMS Number: 1636 that has been working in this area for some time and has been actively promoting the use of Land Races in organic farming systems. There are some useful synergies between the three (including the UNEP) projects. | In the beginning of 2007 the Agrobio Project and the UNEP Regional Project have concluded memorandum of cooperation, regularly communicate and discuss various aspects of genetic conservation, including in farming systems. However, despite focusing on *ex situ*-conservation, the UNEP project has no data on promotion of Land Races of crop wild relatives by farmers and consequently concentrates attention on the age-old species delivered to territory of Kazakhstan | The Agrobio Project will study materials of project implementation in Georgia and will try to co-ordinate with UNEP project the possibility of joint researches for use of local crop wild relatives by the farmers. In case of successful negotiations and encouraging results, the PIU will revise the issue of possible synergism of project activities aimed at support of promotion of local crop wild relatives by the farmers | 3-4 quarters, 20091-2 quarters, 2010 |
| 8. The PIU develops an “exit strategy” in the next year to demonstrate how the achievements will be embedded institutionally in order to sustain the impact on agrobiodiversity conservation. The “exit strategy” should take account of the plausible impact of the global economic downturn and its likely impact on co-financing and capital investment in the protected areas system and rural development (e.g. ecotourism). One possible option would allow the PIU to focus some of its effort over the next year (2009) on leveraging additional funding (non-GEF funds) from other sources with a view to extending lifetime of the project (see section 5.3). The “exit strategy” should also focus on ways that institutions, particularly the protected areas can capitalize on the future use values of agrobiodiversity as a means to fund their conservation management. Consideration should be given to the possibility of using Technical Assistance to develop this financing mechanism. | All GEF projects are aimed at stability that predetermines corresponding measures for subsequent (after completion of the project) realization of the project. Certainly, these measures should be based on economic possibilities of the state for their real implementation and existing financial mechanisms. The existing source – SPA own funds made from rendering of certain kinds of paid services can be used as one of such mechanisms. The part of them (from use of fruits and berries by forest users) has already formed the funds of this source. In process of increasing need in other values, the list of such services will be extended and the order of use of these funds will be specified. | 1. The PIU will develop “exit strategy” for the next year after completion of the project and will submit it for coordination to UNDP and FHC2. The PIU together with UNDP and FHC will study and define additional sources of co-financing other than GEF for financing of works under the project and its prolongation (in particular, Fund of Kazakhstan Biodiversity Conservation which in process of capitalisation should become national financial tool of conservation, etc.) | 2011.2009–2011 |
| 9. The FHC, UNDP and the PIU consider carefully whether they need a project representative to be based in Astana. Given the likely financial constraints on the protected areas and the project during the next three years this position can either be reassigned within the project or the position is moved to Almaty and used to “drive” the recommendations outlined in 5.2 below. | Project representative based in Astana was engaged in coordination of engineering specifications developed by the project (natural-scientific study and feasibility study) for creation of Zhongar-Alatau National Park and promoted improvement of interaction of the PIU with FHC and UNDP office. At present, in connection with statement of NSS and FS, streamlining of procedures of documents revision in UNDP, the problem acuteness is eliminated and there is no need in such position in Astana. And, considering decrease in project budget for the next years, the decision was made on reduction of this position  | In connection with reduction of project representative in Astana the project will reconsider staff structure and will redistribute the duties of this expert among other experts | February-March, 2009completed |
| Recommendations Outcome 1: *Ecosystem-based conservation and management of wild crop relatives at two project sites*. |
| ● The project makes a detailed ecological analysis of the existing fruit forests contained within the genetic reserves and identifies a number of indicators for conservation status and quality of the wild fruit forests (e.g. age structure, recruitment – vegetative and seedling -, intra and inter-specific diversity, level of genetic ingression from cultivars, extent/area, etc.). The purpose of this would be to compare different areas and genetic reserves and to develop a long term monitoring programme[[2]](#footnote-3) for wild fruit forest recovery. Much of the existing data could be utilized and a simple survey methodology could be developed with an emphasis on cost effectiveness and replication of data collection (e.g. fixed transects and the use of Distance sampling[[3]](#footnote-4) and quick and simple analysis) for future data collection. An important point in ecological monitoring is establishing robust indicators that are cost-effective. | The project before evaluation has planned and now conducts detailed analysis of fruit forests contained within the genetic reserves. Within the limits of these works it identifies a number of indicators for organisation of monitoring of wild fruit forests status and defines monitoring platforms for future monitoring by the forces of scientific departments of Ile-Alatau and establishing Zhongar-Alatau National Parks  | The PIU uses the experience of international technical consultant for selection of optimum methodology of organisation and monitoring of wild fruit forest ecosystem condition and will promote its introduction in SPA of projected area | 2009-2010. |
| ● The PIU adopts the Threat Reduction Analysis tool as a means to measure the effectiveness of the projects interventions. Once familiar with this methodology the PIU works with the protected area staff to train them in the methodology. The TRA is not “the answer” but does provide a quick and cheap method to monitor the effectiveness of both the project and the long term management interventions. | Any tool of efficiency evaluation including TRA is important for maintenance of productivity of project implementation. Therefore the PIU is ready to consider this methodology for use in their work | 1. The PIU will revise proposed methodology and will try to apply it for analysis of project effects on existing threats to mountain agro-biodiversity2. The PIU in case of acceptability of this methodology will offer to introduce it in activity of APA of projected area  | 20092010  |
| ● The project (in collaboration with the Scientific-Research and Mountain Agrobiodiversity Departments) develop a long term monitoring programme based upon the indicators derived from the ecological analysis and the TRA exercises. The purpose of which is to monitoring programme for the recovery and conservation of the wild fruit forest genetic reserves. By the end of the project this monitoring programme will need to be embedded in the protected areas management plans. | As it was mentioned above, the PIU is engaged in organisation of monitoring, identification of corresponding indicators and definition of a number of monitoring platforms to control wild fruit forest condition. It is provided that a basis of this monitoring program will be allocated by PIU genetic reserves  | See key actions in subparagraph 1 of this section.Besides, the PIU will promote embed of actions for monitoring of wild fruit forests in the protected areas management plans | 2009-2011 |
| ● The substantive TA (overall recommendations point 6) develops guidelines for the ex situ collection and the rehabilitation of genetic reserves. | See comments in the PIU response and key actions to item 6 of General recommendations |  |  |
| ● The project – using an adaptive management approach – develops a spread of different experimental management approaches to rehabilitating the genetic reserves (e.g. small plot trials with different management prescriptions) | The PIU develops different approaches / methods of restoration of wild fruit forests and provides researches for selection of the most cost-effective and acceptable methods | 1. The PIU will develop technical recommendations and approves technologies of cultivation of apple and apricot planting stock using root shanks and method of green cutting, and will carry out development works to promote natural recovery of apple-trees at different sites.2. The PIU will offer optimal recovery methods for various habitats  | 2009-2010 2010 |
| **Recommendations Outcome 2: *Strengthened institutional, technical, and financial framework for ABD conservation*** |
| ● Key staff of Dzhungar and Ile-Alatau National Parks participate in the development of an adaptive management approach. | See comments in the PIU response and key actions to item 3 of General recommendations. Thus it should be noted that these activities will be implemented for Ile-Alatau National Park in 2009-2010, and for Zhongar-Alatau they will be planned after establishment (approximately after 2010) |  |  |
| ● The Scientific-Research and Mountain Agrobiodiversity Department in IASNNP participates in the planning and implementation of the experimental approaches to rehabilitating the genetic reserves. | The PIU has already involved IASNNP staff in experimental works aimed at restoration of genetic reserves. In particular, in 2009 it participates in the first phase of works on detailed inventory in genetic reserves and establishment of their legal status | The Project in process of approval / acceptance of experimental approaches to rehabilitating the genetic reserves will promote planning in SPA and consecutive rehabilitation at the sites of wild fruit forests based on these approaches | 2010-2011 |
| ● The project holds a planning workshop with the Key staff of Dzhungar and Ile-Alatau National Parks to review the effectiveness of the management plan (including the genetic reserves) and the impact of the present economic downturn. This should be a participatory workshop (if necessary a substantive TA should be engaged to facilitate the workshop) and should pose the question “How do we best conserve the agrobiodiversity resources within the protected area for the next 15 years”. The question includes 3 aspects – time, place/scale and subject – sufficient to generate a strategy to cope with the economic downturn predicted for the next 3 years. | The PIU in performance objective of involved international TA (technical adviser) provides his participation in workshop for Ile-Alatau National Park personnel. As for Dzhungar Park holding of such workshop in the current year will be ineffective, as it is planned to create SPA there only in 2010. | The project by results of technical evaluation and on the basis of preliminary recommendations of international adviser will hold (with participation of the latter) a workshop / meeting with the personnel of Ile-Alatau National Park on planning of nature protection activities for the next years and prospects. | July-August, 2009 |
| **Recommendations Outcome 3: *An effective legislative framework for the conservation and rational use of agro-biodiversity resources*** |
| ● The project works closely with the working group on ABS law and the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative housed within CAREC to ensure that agrobiodiversity is sufficiently included in the ABS legislation being prepared (for instance would any ABS legislation recognise the need to finance protected areas and specifically genetic reserves). | In 2007 the Project concluded memorandum of cooperation with Kazakhstan Biodiversity Conservation Association (KBCA), which actively develops mechanisms of Altyn Dala Conservation, including teamwork in the field of legislation. At present the Concept of Flora Bill is prepared and the first version of bill text is revised. | 1. The project will prepare the first version of Flora Bill which makes provision for protection and use of genetic resources, and will discuss it with Kazakhstan Biodiversity Conservation Association and other partners and concerned persons 2. The project will promote the inclusion of this Bill in Legislative Plan of the Government of RK for 2010 - 2011 | November, 2009December, 2009-2010 |
| ● Following the input from the substantive TA (5.1 point 6) the PIU prepares a position statement/briefing document for the “Concept of State Forestry Policy 2020” being prepared by the Forestry and hunting Committee of MoA which addresses the issues of the “genetic reserve conservation” and “ex situ conservation” paradigm. This document should be shared with the UNEP project | The Project Work Plan for 2009 approved by FHC provides participation of PIU in development of Concept of State Forestry Policy prepared by Ministry of Agriculture and FHC. Besides, the project is engaged in conservation of genetic stocks by giving the status genetic reserves to the most valuable sites, as well as works through the problems of *ex situ* conservation by means of creation of living collection of apple and apricot variety. The project is intended to co-operate with UNEP project  | 1. The project taking into account the suggestions of independent international technical adviser will complete the version MABD conservation strategy and will submit it to FHC 2. On the basis of conservation strategy the PIU will submit such suggestions which address the issues of conservation and restoration of MABD to FHC to embed in Concept of State Forestry Policy 2020 | September, 2009October, 2009 |
| **Recommendations Outcome 4: *Alternative livelihoods benefiting local communities in project sites, reducing natural resource use pressure on mountain agro-biodiversity*** |
| ● The project includes sustainable use of agrobiodiversity in this component as part of its overall intervention strategy, including the use of more cultivars that are directly derived from the wild stock. This will involve developing an on-farm component to the alternative livelihoods approach of outcome 4. | The project does not include in overall intervention strategy the use of more cultivars of apples that are directly delivered from the wild-growing stock. As the alternative there is a question of removal of cultured gardens from wild fruit tree zones and support of fruit-growing development by farmers in adjoining territory out of risk zone for wild species.To the point, MTE offers to update project strategy and develop on-farm component. But for this purpose GEF/UNEP authorised the other Regional *in situ/on-farm* project which is simultaneously realised in Kazakhstan. Considering this fact, the PIU sees no need in changing of project strategy, but is ready to strengthen interaction on this question with specified UNEP project  | Offered key activities of PIU on this issue are stated in item 7 of General Recommendations |  |
| ● The project reviews the experience of the GEF-funded Small Grants Programme in particular the ex-post report on the “Conservation of Wild Apple Tree Woods in the Foothills of Zailiyski Alatau (Agrobiodiversity of Alatau)”. The use of wild apples for vinegar-making offers possibilities for sustainable use and, in the event that Land Races are located, possibilities for on-farm conservation, etc., as well as an opportunity to draw down on a significant fund for development. | At a stage of Agrobio Project development the PIU reviewed the experience of the GEF Small Grants Programme. It is offered to use this experience as alternative and to support local economy development. However wild apple tree, firstly, is included in the Red Book of Kazakhstan and use of its fruits is strictly regulated by legislation; secondly, in habitat it bears fruits irregularly, and it is economically inexpedient to establish steady production using these raw material. However such production can be established on the basis of the use of cultivars. Thus the possibilities of organisation of such production in project activity zone should be reviewed taking into account market needs in such products. The PIU will be guided by MTE recommendations that “the PIU should not try to create the market, but only to promote its development” | The PIU will review the possibilities to support apple vinegar-making and to provide effective demand in the market, then it will make a decision on activities in this direction within the framework of Outcome 4  | 2009-2010 |
| **Recommendations Outcome 4: *Alternative livelihoods benefiting local communities in project sites, reducing natural resource use pressure on mountain agro-biodiversity*** |
| ● The project investigates the existence of any Land Races of apples and other fruit trees. Should these be found,[[4]](#footnote-5) the project will need to prepare a programme to multiply and distribute the stock amongst farmers | The comment and key activities of the project are outlined in subitem 1 to Recommendations Outcome 4, and also to item 7 of General Recommendations |  |  |
| ● The project switches its alternative livelihoods approach from trying to develop markets to one which tries to build on existing markets. For instance there is an existing market for honey whereas the market for ecotourism/home stays is one which is as yet poorly developed and unproven. Apple production is another existing market therefore alternative livelihoods should seek to develop ways in which this can be developed and value added at the same time that the issue of genetic ingression into the genetic reserves is addressed[[5]](#footnote-6). The take up of micro-credit has been low and a market-led initiative (i.e. developing existing enterprises associated with fruit growing may encourage risk-averse local communities to take up loans because they are familiar with the products and technologies. It is important to bear in mind that constraints to economic development may not be caused by poor access to credit but rather to poor access to markets. | In connection with MTE proposal the Project will be focused on successful experience and reject the results which have not justified expectations.The PIU has to ascertain that not all kinds of alternative activity provided by the project and reviewed log-frames are of interest and find economic preconditions in the places of project realisation. In particular:a) actually, *ecotourism* market is poorly developed and can effectively operate only at support of large travel agencies which do not show interest in this field as yet;b) *growing of medicinal herbs* is very expensive and labor-consuming and requires special agricultural engineering and above all has no active support from farmers yet; d) *cheese making* and *floriculture* are not widespread among local communities due to absence of access to the markets; e) Most likely that accepted indicators of growth of *farms which introduce steady methods of cattle breading* will be unacceptable, - it is expedient not to dissipate the energies and take into consideration MTE recommendation for pilot project development only in one village; f) Attention should be paid to Recommendations on generation of only one indicator for *improved*  *apiculture in existing manufacturers of honey*; g) In consideration of project profile, it is possible to include new indicator for support of *fruit-growing* development  | The PIU in accordance with MTE recommendations will prepare and submit to UNDP and NCC (National Coordination Council) the offers of specification / change of indicators according to Outcome 4 | December, 2009 |
| ● The proposed position of micro-credit specialist shortly to be advertised should be dropped. The existing micro-credit institutions offer sufficient assistance to potential borrowers already (e.g. business planning advice, etc.). Given that we are entering a period of considerable financial uncertainty and risk it is important that any enterprises promoted by the project are thoroughly vetted by the lender to ensure that they are – as much as is possible to determine – economically viable. | Taking into account MTE recommendations the proposed position is dropped. Involvement of micro-credit specialist on the terms of SSA-contract for 4-5-menths period was planned to activate the work under micro-crediting program and to achieve indicators on a number of participants of alternative kinds of activity using micro-credits | The PIU will strengthen interaction with project partner "KazMicroFinance" LLP to stimulate potential for more successful implementation of micro-crediting program by means of holding of working meetings, joint participation in project workshops for local communities, and publication of joint information materials on this issue | 2009-2011  |
| **Recommendations Outcome 5: *Awareness and support increased at all levels regarding the values and need to conserve Kazakhstan’s mountain agro-biodiversity*** |
| ● The project continues to promote the importance of agrobiodiversity through mass media and other opportunities, and in addition to this | In 2008 the PIU has developed informing strategy which is taken as a principle of development of all information work of the project. At present the PIU a) together with partners has organised and held republican Festival of Tulips, b) annually publishes and periodically promotes information through mass media and websites, c) prepares video film in Kazakh, Russian and English which showing is organized on TV channels, etc. | The project will continue informing strategy which will familiarize population with value and necessity of conservation of wild fruit forests, as well as publication of methodical and special literature for nature conservation services of forestry and SPA for improvement of their professional knowledge in this field | 2009-2011 |
| ● Following the input from the international TA (overall recommendations point 6) the project decides upon the feasibility of developing a communication plan to articulate a more sophisticated message about the conservation management of agrobiodiversity developing the “genetic reserve conservation” and “on farm conservation” paradigm. This message should be aimed at decision-makers and other institutions. | Comments and key activities are stated in previous subparagraph of Recommendations Outcome 5 |  |  |

1. Mariam Shotadze mariam.shotadze@undp.org [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. “Development of long-term research and monitoring programme specifically for ABD in the project sites which will generate information of direct application for management” Project Document p52 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. http://www.ruwpa.st-and.ac.uk/distance/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. The MTE recognises that these may have become “extinct” during the Soviet period – but it is essential to determine whether they still exist. An example of this can be found in Georgia where a UNDP-GEF project found a 160 year-old pear tree that pre-dated the Soviet period of collectivisation – it was growing quite close to a major road! [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. The MTE considers that the projects efforts in developing some of the alternative livelihoods has not been wasted, indeed it has provided valuable lessons and now it should re-focus on those that were successful and abandon those that have not performed as well as anticipated. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)