**Annex: Management Response and Tracking Template**

**Evaluation Title: Mid-Term Project Evaluation - Integrated Conservation of Priority Globally Significant Migratory Bird Wetland Habitat: A Demonstration on Three Sites**

**Evaluation Completion Date: May 9, 2008**

**Management Response document last updated: June 16, 2008**

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| **Key issues and Recommendations** | **Management Response\*** | | | | **Tracking\*\*** | |
| **Response** | **Key Actions** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible unit (s)** | **Status \*\*\*** | **Comments** |
| 1. Indicators should be refined in order to provide a more accurate measurement of project success | During the MTE proposals were made for refining almost all project indicators.  Due to the completed work for expansion of PAs, for implementation of system biodiversity and habitat monitoring and PA Management Plans at the national level, for awareness building based on PRA methodologies and other accomplishments the Project is confident that it can attain the objectives specified in the Logframe.  Impact of project activities on the conservation can be measured by such species as Dalmatian pelican, white-headed duck and coot. The only exception is Relict gull. These species inhabit the AS, although there has been no evidence of their breeding during the years of project implementation, that is why measurable project indicator has been changed from ‘a number of breeding pairs of species’ to ‘a number of species inhabiting the site’. Taking into account that at present time the Alakol Lake is the only place in Kazakhstan where these species can be quite regularly found, it was decided to take any observation of these species on the project site as valuable characteristics. For other species the project uses the indicators which reflect the stability of populations inhabiting the sites or demonstration of their increase. Soundness of such selection made by the project experts was confirmed by specialists from BirdLife International and RSPB during our consultations with them in the process of identifying and selecting indicator species. And the qualitative indicators given in the Logframe do reflect a healthy and safe condition of these populations.  Targets under Indicator 9 ‘Boundaries of protected areas increased to include valuable ecosystems’ does not have to reconcile with targets under Indicator 2, ‘Number of hectares under conservation management’ as Indicator 9 is about expansion of PAs including both wetlands and other surrounding valuable ecosystems, particularly in our case – steppe ecosystems. Hence, the project provides for larger PA expansion as compared to Indicator 2. As for wetlands, the baseline number of hectares under conservation management was 278,676 he. By project end it is planned to increase area of wetlands under conservation to 516,709 he.  The Project team intends to describe specific destructive activities, to clarify ‘improved fishery management’ in Indicators 14 and 16, weaknesses of Indicator 15 and non-measurability of Indicator 17. | Complete analysis of feasibility of attaining Logframe indicators by the Project  Decision to adjust indicators 14-17 | 03.05.08  10.05.08 | PIU  PIU | Completed  Completed | Project reviewed indicators of the Logframe. The decision was made to refine Indicators 14-16 under Outcome 4 and Indicator 17 under Outcome 5. Relevant changes have been made in the Logframe. |
| 1. Conduct a comprehensive policy and institutional gaps analysis. | The Project has conducted detailed analysis of the legislation and prepared recommendations for wetlands conservation and use. Due to this work the new Protected Areas Law No. 175-III dated 7 July 2006 now includes provisions on inclusion of globally significant wetlands into PAs and setting a special regime for globally significant wetlands (Article 75). Project prepared proposals for amending the Water Code and the Law on Wildlife Protection, Reproduction and Use as related to the conservation and sound management of wetland resources. The proposals have been accepted by government authorities and draft laws are now being considered by the RoK Parliament. As for the new Ecological Code dated 23.01.2007 No. 12, this Code includes provisions on environmental requirements to PAs incl. globally significant wetlands (Articles 253-255) and separate environmental requirements to economic and other activities in the conservation zone of the Caspian Sea where the Ural river runs into (Articles 256-269). The Ecological Code is of direct effect and includes environmental requirements for using land, water and wildlife.  Working Group has been established to coordinate drafting of inter-agency agreement on wetlands. It includes representatives of the Water Committee, Fishery Committee, Committee for Forestry and Hunting and MoEP. | Draft secondary legal regulations for implementation of new provisions of the Water Code for the protection and adequate water supply to wetlands and enforcement of the RoK Law On the Protection, Reproduction and Use of Animals as related to protections and sound use of animals at wetlands.  Draft and approve interagency agreement on wetland issues.  Draft Kazakh Wetlands Conservation and Sound Use Concept for 2009-2018 | 2008 -2009  August 2008  December 2008 | PIU  PIU  PIU | Pending  Pending  Pending | List of secondary regulations is to be agreed to by relevant government authorities |
| 1. Amend the Water Code to provide comprehensive, ecosystem level protection for wetlands that occur both inside and outside of protected areas. | This recommendation is directly linked with the above recommendation. See Management Response above. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Create institutional structures capable of supporting integrated, ecosystem approaches to wetlands conservation on both national and local levels | At the national level, the Council for Sustainable Development chaired by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan was established in 2004 and is functioning now. According to Article 43 of the Water Code Basin Councils were established in 2007 in Kazakhstan; such councils are advisory bodies established under basin agreements and chaired by heads of relevant basin authority. Basin Council consists of heads of local representative and executive authorities, heads of regional offices of ministries and agencies, nature reserves and representatives of water users as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations. Basin Council reviews critical issues related to the use and protection of water resources and submits proposals and recommendations to the parties of Basin Agreements. During 2007 the project experts actively worked on water supply of wetlands with the leadership of Balkhash-Alakol, Ural-Caspian and Nura-Sarysu Basin Authorities who chair relevant Basin Councils.  The inter-agency agreement is aimed to enhance coordination among government authorities. | Directors of the Alakol and Korgalzhyn Nature Reserves included into Basin Councils.  Prepare mechanism for implementation of inter-agency agreement provisions on a continuous basis | 2007  September 2008 | PIU  PIU | Completed  Pending | Water issues were considered by the Council for Sustainable Development in December 2007.  Agendas of Balkhash-Alakol, Ural-Caspian and Nura-Sarysu Basin Councils for second half of 2007 will include issues of the three project sites. |
| 1. Create regulatory structures that address issues related to productive sector activity that adversely impacts wetlands conservation | In Kazakhstan there are eight Basin Authorities, one of their major functions is to issue permits in accordance with the Rules for Issuing Permits for Special Water Use approved by the RoK Government Resolution No. 56 dated January 20, 2004.  As for regulation of game husbandries and fisheries it is the jurisdiction of authorized agencies in charge of hunting and fishery.  Resource Management Councils were established during the project under the local executive authorities as advisory boards. These councils will consider issues of agriculture, fishery and hunting as well as tourist and recreation activities in alignment with biodiversity conservation issues. The councils include representatives of all above-mentioned stakeholders. | Expand Project activities for implementation of RMC recommendations related to productive sector activity at the national and subnational levels. | December 2008 | PIU | Pending | First meeting of the TK RMC considered the issues of fishery, second meeting was devoted to ecotourism development in the region. As a result, the decisions were made on priority measures for promoting sustainable fishery management and ecotourism development and were included into local budget program for 2009. |
| 1. Address issues of pollution prevention, including possible oil pollution mitigation needs. | There are no oil fields directly at the project sites, issues concerned with oil pollution mitigation are addressed by natural resources users/oil companies in cooperation with MoEP at all stages in oil project exploration and development. These issues are regulated by the Environmental Code. Besides, oil companies take certain environmental measures, including risk mitigation and oil pollution reduction, which are agreed with MoEP. National Oil Company KazMunayGas and Agip KCO under the ‘Program of Infrastructure Development to Support Offshore Petroleum Operations’ in 2008-2009 will establish the North Caspian Oil Spill Response Centre. | Continue close collaboration with MoEP, regional environmental protection authorities and nature users.  Increase Project involvement in discussion of issues for oil pollution prevention. | 2008-2010 | PIU | Partially completed | The Project actively participated in public hearings on establishment of the North Caspian Oil Spill Response Centre and on Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline in 2006 close to the Zhalanashkol in AS project site. |
| 1. Strengthen wildlife and natural resource law enforcement outside of protected areas. | During project implementation some draft regulations fishery were prepared. To enhance Alakol fish conservation authority the project procured a craft with heavy motor. To enforce legislation on the conservation of rare sturgeon the project recommendations for expansion of pre-estuary zone in URD prohibited for fishing. In 2005-2006, for the first time all fisheries bodies and game husbandries at three project sites were assigned to specific resource users for longer period (10 years instead of 1 year) and promoted higher interest of resource users in development of sustainable fish and game management and abrupt reduction in poaching.  However, the Project agrees with this recommendation. The most pragmatic way for the project is to expand work with game users, fishing organizations, farmers and other stakeholders. | Identify ways for expanding Project activities to facilitate wildlife and natural resource law enforcement outside of protected areas.  Deliver training for game husbandries and fishing organizations on the legislation, accounting and monitoring and sustainable fish and game management methods.  Measures for reducing illegal fishery | September 2008  May-December  2008  2008-2009 | PIU | Pending  Partially completed  Pending | On 24 May 2008 the project conducted a workshop on the legislation, monitoring sustainable game management for 9 game husbandries from TK project site. |
| 1. Integrate protected area management with management of surrounding productive landscapes, using capacities built within protected area administrations to build wetlands management capacities outside of protected areas. | The project appreciates this recommendations as the MTE report says that the project should be serving as a catalyst to meaningfully stimulate and formalize: inter-agency coordination; cooperation between local, private and public land managers; land use planning (functional and ecological zoning); adaptive species management, including “take” quotas based upon broader, cooperative scientific research and monitoring; and, systems for regulating the use of wetlands and water outside of protected areas that is much more ecologically comprehensive.  At the same time, it should be noted that the project has done a lot in this area: the project was the pioneer in introducing ecosystem approach for three project sites through identification of ecosystem/landscape types, the project also performed functional zoning of the areas resulting in indicators being identified for each zone which provide for regulation and evaluation of activities for resource conservation and sustainable use. Thus, the project has already created the basis both in terms of regional planning of land use and for regulation of wetland resource management outside of PAs. For primary integration of PA management with surrounding productive landscape management the Project is drafting the Conservation Zone Statute for the Alakol and Korgalzhyn PAs. | Formal approval of the Alakol and Korgalzhyn Conservation Zone Statute for resource management regulation at surrounding landscapes.  Provide assistance to local authorities in land use planning in line with functional zoning by the Project.  Provide assistance to pilot fish farms and game husbandries in implementation of sustainable management methods based on scientific researches and monitoring data  Disseminate lessons learnt among other units of three project sites | December 2008  2008  2008-2009  2009 | PIU | Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending | Activities are undertaken at AS and TK project sites to introduce sustainable fish and game management methods. |
| 1. Support expanded public participation in protected area management. | Newly approved Management Plans for Alakol and Korgalzhyn Nature Reserves provide for public participation in decision-making processes. To implement the proposed measures the project provides advisory support in two PAs. In addition, PA Scientific and Technical Councils include members from local administrations and senior citizens of local communities.  Ecological campaigns, festivals, involvement of local community members as guides, assistance in creation of guest houses, etc. are quite effective for attracting public attention to the PA issues. Community organizations, educational institutions, local authorities, mass media and sponsors are involved in such activities. | Continue this work in close collaboration with educational institutions, administrations, public organization, local community, etc. | 2008-2010 | PIU | Pending | From 2004 through to first half of 2008 the project has been conducting annual Marsh of Parks, activities devoted to the Wetlands Day, Land Day, Environment Day, etc., community organizations, local authorities and local communities participate in such activities. |
| 1. Provide near-term assistance for functionality of the URD reserve. | Project highly appreciates this recommendation as it reconciles with the project efforts for creating the Nature Reserve. Establishment of the reserve in 2009 is provided for in the GoK Resolution No. 914 dated 8 October 2007 approving the Program for the Conservation and Sound Use of Water, Wildlife and Development of PA Network until 2010 (to be submitted in Q4 2008). The projected has created the required basis for establishing the Akzhaiyk reserve: Scientific and Technical Substantiation and Feasibility Study have been prepared and approved and public hearings have been conducted. The decision for establishing the reserve was unanimously supported by local executive authorities, regional environmental, agriculture, fishery, forestry agencies and the public in general. Akim of Atyrau Oblast issued Resolution No. 207 dated 11 September 2007 to reserve 111,500 he land for the Akzhaiyk reserve. The Akimat has allocated a plot of 6 he for constructing the headquarters.  As for proposals for trained and salaried government protected area staff from other project sites to be assigned to work in the URD reserve, provision of short-term financial assistance for infrastructure requirements, including purchase of vehicles, boats, computer, etc. required to make the protected area functional in the near term, this will be imprudent because this will not facilitate near term functionality of the PA in URD, in addition, procurement of equipment without a beneficiary creates certain risk of inappropriate use of such equipment. Experience sharing and intensive training courses will be conducted in 2009 after the PA staff is recruited. | Track process for inclusion of the Akzhaiyk Nature Reserve into the 2009 budget program.  Draft GoK Resolution on establishment of the Akzhaiyk Nature Reserve  Draft Management Plan for Akzhaiyk Nature Reserve  Deliver training with PA staff and experience sharing study tours | July-September 2008  August -September 2008  December 2008  2009 | PIU | Pending | There are certain risks for establishing the reserve caused by sharp fall in public expenditures due to the financial crisis |
| 1. Develop a communication strategy to guide public awareness activities | Project has done a lot in this area. It plans to make even stronger focus on groups and potential communication and marketing strategy. Creation of strong, knowledgeable interested groups among the stakeholders and ensuring access of local communities to decision making should be the key drivers of the strategy. | Develop communication strategy till 2010 with cleat identification of target audience and impact timeframe.  Disseminate information among target group, on a continuous basis. | November 2008 | PIU | Pending | Up to now awareness activities were aimed at various target groups:  - farmers: manuals published, demonstration projects for improving land use system and introduction of environmentally sound techniques implemented;  - schoolchildren: ecoeducation programs elaborated, workshops conducted for school teachers, programs introduced in pilot schools;  - water users: program on irrigation safe for biodiversity prepared, awareness building campaign conducted for establishing water user associations at AS project site;  - PA staff: management plans elaborated, PA monitoring methodological guidelines prepared, workshops conducted, training delivered to PA security personnel, researchers and ecoeducation;  - local community: training of guides, workshops on alternative livelihoods and ecotourism; suing such workshops people learn about wetlands values.  - others: dissemination of newsletters, installation of information screens, publication of reference books, publication of articles in the mass media (press and TV), news at Project Web site, etc. |
| 1. Quantify and summarize protected area and project area information in a format suitable for project evaluation | Quantitative indicators characterizing project sites, including PAs, are presented in table format. | GIS data processing | May 2008 | PIU | Completed |  |
| 1. Expand eco-education and youth conservation corps (youth in protected areas) programs | Project thanks for recognition of the work conducted by the project for eco-education. Project agrees with the proposed recommendations as we are continuing the work for preparing eco-education modules at the project sites. So far the project has prepared prepress version of the first module on birds. | First eco-education modules on Birds. Publication is in process.  Preparation of second eco-education module on Vegetable Kingdom.  Preparation of third eco-education module on Water Lessons. | Implementation of three modules from September 2008 | PIU | Completed  Pending  Pending | All three modules include practical and applicative lessons on wetland biodiversity conservation.  Module 1 contains materials about birds, bird watching techniques as well games, tests quizzes.  Module 2 will contain materials on vegetation monitoring and will be a reference book for schoolchildren.  Module 3 will contain materials on schoolchildren’s work on aquatic ecosystems. |
| 1. Create national inventory of wetlands | List of Globally Significant Wetlands in Kazakhstan was prepared under the project in collaboration with academic institutions, environment authority and NGOs. The basis for identifying globally significant wetlands in Kazakhstan are nine criteria set by the Ramsar Convention. Indicators of each wetland were compared against Ramsar criteria. Project published a booklet ‘Globally Significant Wetlands in Kazakhstan’ citing the globally significant wetlands and demonstrating their location at the map. The government environmental authority accepted this inventory as a basis and one wetland from the list was included into the Ramsar List (Tengiz-Korgalzhyn Lakes, for now the only Ramsar wetland), an application is under preparation for other six wetlands to be included into the Ramsar List. Hence, the project believes that the work in this area should be continued to its completion. | Prepare digital map of globally significant wetlands  Inventory of globally significant wetlands approved formally by GoK.  Assistance in complementing the inventory with other wetlands that meet the Ramsar criteria based on inventory by research institutions and initiation of including nationally and locally significant wetlands into the inventory. | December 2008  2009  2009-2010 | PIU | Pending  Pending  Pending |  |
| 1. Elaborate with local governments sustainable development policies that use wetlands conservation as key development objective | Pursuant to the current legislation, local executive authorities have sustainable development mandate. The authorized government agency in charge of sustainable development is the Ministry of Environmental Protection.  At the same time one should say that the project identified sustainable development targets for all project sites. The project focuses on the following sustainable development priorities: biodiversity conservation, more efficient use of resources and introduction of sustainable production and consumption models, energy efficiency and saving, gender and environment mainstreaming in poverty eradication, development of science and education for sustainable development.  As for local governments, Project is conducting activities for implementation of sustainable agriculture techniques, ecotourism development and other alternative livelihoods. | Take relevant measures to improve targets especially for resource use areas (agriculture, irrigation and water management, fishing and hunting) together with relevant government authorities.  Prepare annual report on sustainable development progress and disseminate it at the national and local levels. | 2008-2010  2008-2010 | PIU | Pending  Pending | Implementation of sustainable development objectives by the example of wetlands project was presented at the national sustainable development workshop on 18-19 March 2008 (Almaty) |
| 1. Develop comprehensive tourism management policies and plans for AS project site | Project thanks for the recommendations and proposes the following plan for implementing the recommendation.  Activities proposed by the project are to maintain environmental assets of AS project site. We plan to develop regulated ecotourism with due regard to recreation capacity of natural ecosystems.  Project efforts are aimed at creation of a tourist route network, involvement of local residents as guides, advertisement campaign for attracting tourists through Internet technologies, bringing various tourist services to a new quality level. Activities are undertaken for incorporating tourism development into plans of local executive authorities and travel companies in Almaty and East Kazakhstan oblasts. | Ecotourism Development Programme approved and incorporated into Tourism Development Programmes in Alakol Rayon of Almaty Oblast  Actions for ecotourism development at AS project site incorporated into tourism development plans in Almaty Oblast.  Several types of tourism are intended for development subject to tourist interests (bird watching, orientation tourism, sport fishing, research tourism).  Various tourism services are to be raised to a new quality level and a campaign for attracting tourists, improving safety and comfort for tourists.  Work for enhancing tourist routes. | April 2008  October 2008  2008-2010  2008-2009  2008-2009 | PIU | Completed  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending | Almaty Oblast Akimat prepared and approved Master Plan for the Alakol Lake Coast. Project elaborated tourist routes and activities are undertaken for their alignment. Training workshops are conducted for guides from local communities. Training has been delivered for improving quality of services of guest houses. Assistance has been provided for preparing project proposals by local NGOs for obtaining grants from GEF SGP. |
| 1. Strengthen alternative revenue generation options | At present this issue is of high priority and the MTE was correct to recommend strengthening alternative revenue generation options. The Project document provides for the development of alternative livelihood so that it will replace destructive types of economic activities with the aim to reduce the pressure on the wetland biodiversity in the productive landscapes. In connection with this, the project has determined major alternative practices, which include all types of economic activities in the productive landscape with a focus on sustainable activities or practices which cause no harm to the wetland biodiversity. These types of activities are quite specific and costly; in other words, environment-friendly business unable to make quick income. Therefore, the project staff has sufficient and adequate understanding of the development of alternative opportunities of earning money. The problem is in the so-called ‘destructive types of livelihoods’ that are damaging the wetland biodiversity, and yet are traditional for each of the protected areas and quite profitable. In this case, it is quite difficult to achieve significant results in diverting people from profitable business, like unsustainable fishing or intensive farming, by offering them alternative sources of income with an emphasis on environment-friendly business.  The approach suggested by the evaluation experts on conducting business planning seminars for the communities could be very useful, provided that the project was meant to achieve only the development of business capacity without assigning priority to the specificity of this issue. It is important to mention that this approach is not sufficient in terms of effectiveness and results. Normally, local communities develop business plans for trading activities as this type business allows them to get a quick profit, and they are less concerned with the idea of developing alternative businesses. Besides, financial organizations which provide grants and micro-credits normally have certain requirements to the formats of credit or grant applications.  The recommendations also suggest assisting businesses in getting access to the GoK micro-credit program. It should be said that regardless of variety and great numbers of existing micro-credit organizations, the demand for credits remains unsatisfied.  The project review found that quite often micro-financing was inaccessible for rural population due to high interest, inability to prepare good project application, lack of liquid security, lack of representative office of some financial organizations at project sites. In most cases grants are given to NGOs, as for the locals getting a grant is still a problem.  Given the above and in order to provide opportunities for alternative livelihoods, the project has taken measures to develop Project Microcrediting Programme. This programme will be aimed at developing alternative practices and will have favourable micro-crediting terms. The Program is planned to be implemented by means of mutually beneficial cooperation through a micro-credit organization. | Conduct workshops on alternative livelihoods and threats to wetlands biodiversity caused by unsustainable practices.  Launch microcrediting program providing for alternative livelihoods to reduce burden on ecosystems and bioresources.  Conduct of workshops on applying for microcredits with involvement of a microcrediting organization.  Collection of applications and assistance for obtaining funding from microcrediting and grant organizations.  Monitoring of projects and results to identify and evaluate efficacy of activities for reducing negative impacts on wetlands biodiversity. | During 2008  July 2008  2008 – 2009  2008-2009  2009-2010 | PIU | Partially completed  Partially completed  Pending  Pending | There are no large microfinance institutions in Kazakhstan that would lay down rules at the microfinance market but there are apparent leaders among microfinance firms (Kazakh Crediting Fund in Almaty, 1997, non-governmental microcrediting organizations, rural credit partnerships established under the auspices of Agrarian Credit Corporation, Agriculture Financial Support Fund (AFSF) and to a small extent commercial banks. AFSF has an extensive network of branches and representative offices at project sites. AFSF focuses on crediting low income rural residents. Given AFSF’s experience at microfinance market and branching network at project sites as well as the fact that AFSF lends to agricultural producers it is proposed to implement the Microcrediting Programme through AFSF. |
| 1. Re-assess the efficacy of current agricultural development projects | Land degradation and poor soil productivity are some of the most acute problems for all project sites caused by unsustainable farming practices. Lack of steady income makes local community go poaching, illegal hunting, grazing and hay making in PAs. Project initiatives help overcoming negative consequences of land degradation and are quite attractive for land users. At local levels these initiatives will help to reduce poverty and negative impacts on PAs caused by local communities.  One should note that TK project site is represented by three types of ecosystems: ecosystems of semi-arid, arid and desert steppes with numerous lake beds. Distribution of land and aquatic ecosystems is subject to latitudinal and zonal regularities determining biota living environment as well. First the project identified anthropogenous factors (farming, grazing, pyrogenic, plant harvesting, extraction of timber, etc.), which to some extent affect the wetlands and surrounding areas. It should be also noted that decades ago the processes of land abandonment started in this region and the percentage of derelict land in the total agricultural land are is quite substantial. Due to growth in prosperity now there is a backward process of returning derelict land into agricultural turnover. If after such return the former derelict land is farmed more intensively than before, this may cause damage biodiversity and additional negative consequences may happen due to fertilisers and pesticides. With a view to introduce environmentally sound farming technique for derelict land to promote biodiversity the project started demonstrating projects to use this land as enhanced forage producing areas. Project initiatives for sustainable agricultural practices are aimed at enhancing land use systems and implementation of environmentally sound techniques. | Functional zoning of agricultural land and preparation of recommendations on sustainable agriculture by zones.  Diversify cropping patterns to exclude monoculture of cereals (TK), soya bean and sunflower (AS), cucurbits crops (URD) in pilot projects.  Conversion of degraded derelict land into highly productive forage land, i.e. conversion from carbon dioxide emission source into sequestrated carbon depository.  Sustainable rangeland use and conservation methods preventing land degradation.  Use of alternative energy (solar, wind) in remote areas for domestic and production farmers’ needs.  Monitoring of results of project initiatives in stationary ecological sites to assess efficacy of measures. | December 2007  2007 -2009  2008-2009  2008-2009  2007  2008-2010, afterwards – on a continuous basis under NPTSZEM | PIU | Completed  Pending  Pending  Pending  Completed  Pending | Together GEF SGP the project is implementing the following projects to improve rangelands: Creation of Highly Productive Forage Producing Areas in URD with Use of Wind Water Pumps (URD), Introduction of Environmentally Safe Land Degradation Control Methods at Alakol Northern Shoreland (AS) and Implementation of Mobile Cattle Breeding Model for Natural Ecosystems Conservation and Competitive Production in Nura Rayon of Karaganda Oblast (TK).  The issue has been worked through with GOSNPTSZEM for opening stationary ecological monitoring sites at the demonstration fields of perennial grasses seeded in 2007 to monitor history of recultivation. |
| 1. Ensure a continuous monitoring of all irrigation enhancement activities at Alakol and focus water management efforts on regulating water allocations | Open access and uncontrolled water use regime in Alakol rayon which has been in place for the last 15-20 years and linked with the destruction and silting of irrigation systems negatively affects the water supply for AS lakes. Since the collapse of state-owned and collective farms early in 1990-s no maintenance activities have been conducted at farm irrigation networks, its current technical availability is 41%. At present, all farm irrigation networks in the region have been taken out from the state balance and are abandoned. Therefore the project initiated establishment of community associations that would strongly promote sound and efficient water use to result in reduced water intake. To this end 8 rural water user associations (RWUA) were established in the region with project’s assistance.  Significant amount of water which channels cannot hold spreads on fields, creating resalinization, lifting groundwater, destroying countrymen’s houses. The Project procured equipment for repairing farm irrigation network for RWUAs. This is critical because addressing the issue of canal clean-up will allow for reducing water intake and accordingly for mitigate threat to wetlands.  The Project prepared and submitted to the relevant government authority the proposals on AS water supply arrangements to be incorporated intoBalkash-Alakol Basin Integrated Water Resources Use and Conservation Schemes (IWEUCS) included into the draft budget application of the Water Committee for 2008-2009. | Complete activities for establishing water user associations.  Analyze results of experiment for transition from wet single crops (beetroot and soya bean) to other crops with implementation of crop rotation contributing to humus build-up and coating films at canals to reduce watering rates.  Strengthen collaboration with IWEUCS drafters with a view to make decisions on integrated water management.  Strengthen monitoring of irrigation enhancement activities and regulation of water allocations. | December 2008  November  2008  2008-2009  2008-2010 | PIU  PIU  PIU  PIU | Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending | Due to the project activities for maintaining optimum water level in AS lakes consumption limit was reduced for 2008 was reduced from 146 MCM down to 75 MCM relative to decreased irrigated land from 49,000 down to 14,000 he.  RWUA Work Plan for 2008 was prepared to rehabilitate canals with excavator. |
| 1. Create an educated strategy and policy for sustainable management of sport hunting at TK | In general the project agrees with this recommendation as it reconciles with project activities. There are ten game husbandries assigned to private individuals in close vicinity to the Korgalzhyn PA. At present the project is working towards elaboration and demonstration of sustainable hunting management. To this end a pilot game husbandry was selected on the basis of pre-determined criteria and approaches to sustainable hunting management will be prepared for it. We believe that such approach will allow for demonstrating application of sustainable hunting management and to disseminate lessons learnt in other game husbandries at three project sites. | Planning and mapping of game husbandries.  Adaptation of wildlife accounting methodology, preparation of typological map and performance evaluation.  Implement up-to-date biotechnological arrangements. Identify optimal commercial stock.  Develop proposals for enhancing legislation and legal knowledge on game management. Elaborate economic mechanisms for sustainable game management.  Involve local communities in gaining from game husbandries.  Involve international consultant with a view to regulate and manage sport hunting base don best international practises. | 2007  2007-2008  2008-2009  December 2008  2008 – 2009  25 September – 24 November 2008 | PIU | Completed  Partially completed  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending |  |
| 1. Re-assess and technically strengthen current strategies for sustainable management of fisheries | As it was correctly noted in the report fisheries management is a critical issue for all three protected areas. The review of fisheries management by the project found that at all project sites it often happens that inadequate methodologies are applied for assessing permissible catch, Fishing Rules are violated, out-of-spec fishing gears (of inadequate design and net mesh dimensions) and manners are applied and fishing considerably exceeds productional capacity of water bodies, etc.  With a view to introduce sustainable fisheries management the project drafted the Sustainable Fishery Management Concept for Birtaban-Shalkar Lakes and is working towards implementation of its recommendations (ТК). Designing estimates have been prepared for the reconstruction of the Maibalyk fish nursery to increase its capacity; such reconstruction will allow for restoring ruined fish stock in fisheries waters at TK project site with indigenous fish species. Field studies have been conducted to prepare recommendations for sustainable fisheries management at the Koshkarkol Lake (AS). Biological substantiation has been prepared for expanding pre-estuary zone prohibited for fishing at URD and proposals have been submitted to amend the Rules for Expansion of Pre-Estuary Zones for Prohibiting Commercial Fishing in Particular Seasons; this was done to reduce pressure on sturgeon harvesting during migration and spawning season (URD).  When preparing conceptual solutions for efficient but sustainable fisheries management at the project sites the project applies recommendations under innovative approaches to fisheries management elaborated under the auspices of the World Bank. | **AS project site**:  1. Strengthen fishery protection against poaching through transfer of a motor boat made in Finland with a larger power motor to the Alakol Fisheries Inspection.  2. Assess fish productional capacity of the Koshkarkol Lake, determine optimal species composition of commercial fish stock and prepare proposals on the status of harvesting components.  3. Quantify available fishing gears of different types and fishers as well as optimal fishing grounds and resources users required for sustainable fisheries management throughout a year.  4. Prepare proposals for improving regulations on protection, reproduction and use of fish stock and draft regulations.  5. Size possibilities for involving local communities into commercial fish stock management and prepare proposals on modes of interaction between the communities and government structures in addressing specific stock management issues.  6. Develop strategy of researches for estimation of fishery resources and generation of fish fauna for sustainable fisheries management.  7. Prepare standard package for replicating and implementing piloted approaches.  **TK project site:**  1. Revise norms in the Rules of Fishing and Harvesting Other Shellfish that regulate fish harvesting in water bodies in the region with due regard to introduction of science-based limits and prohibitions for fish resources use in northern water bodies.  2. Revise strategy of studies with regard to works for preliminary assessment of fish resources before fish waters are assigned under public contracting as a major objective of fisheries science to be updated on an annual basis as funded by resource users.  3. Prepare biological substantiation and propose to the authorized agency to carry out design and survey and construction works to build Nortyk dam at Uyali lakes to increase fish capacity of delta water bodies of the Nura river.  4. Enforce prohibition of fishing during spawning season.  5. Establish in accordance with the procedures protection zones at channels connecting lakes inter se and with main river where fishing and other activities disturbing natural environment are prohibited.  6. Ensure supervision over compliance to Fishing Rules, prohibitions and limits using statutory enforcement leverages.  7. Improve marketing information system.  8. Develop microfinancing institutions for fishers to invest into storage technologies and small-scale processing of coarse and abundant fish species (bream), including value-adding canning technologies.  **URD project site:**  1. Biological substantiation for expanding pre-estuary zone prohibited for fishing in URD has been prepared and positively appraised by state ecological expert panel.  2. Amend Rules for Expansion of Pre-Estuary Zones for Prohibiting Commercial Fishing.  3. Draft legal regulations on fisheries management in URD.  4. Establish Akzhaiyk Nature Reserve in URD | December 2007  June 2008  June 2008  August  2008  September 2008  June 2008  2008-2010  September 2008  2008-2009  2008  2008-2009  2008-2009  2008-2009  2008-2009  2008-2010  2007  2008  2008-2009  2009 | PIU | Completed  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending  Pending  Completed  Pending  Pending  Pending | As initiated by the World Bank, innovative approaches to fisheries management were elaborated in 2005 by a group of outstanding Kazakh and national experts based on best practices of such countries as Turkey, Albania, Norway, and UK. These approaches were then presented by Simon Diffy, World Bank Consultant on fisheries management and economics, UK. These approaches provide that the issue of reducing sturgeon species as well other fish species can be addressed through development of alternative, competitive fish production techniques with investments to be made in technologies. These include encouragement of tradable fish production as well as improvement of fish nurseries operations.  A considerable barrier for implementation of the project recommendations is inactive position and disinterest of the Fishery Committee (MoA). |
| 1. Work with GoK to create a long-term funding strategy that identifies requirements to sustain critical wetlands conservation activity within the demonstration sites and to replicate these lessons nationally. Formalize the funding strategy through GoK adoption. | The MTE report proposes to a long-term funding strategy providing for increasing salary levels for protected area staff to retain existing and recruit new capable staff and identifying human resource and institutional support requirements to monitor and regulate the use of wetlands outside of protected areas.  As related to long-term funding mechanisms, the Project document provides for establishment of a Trust Fund which is to ensure sustainability of activities at priority sites under the project and robust funding for wetland management in case of unpredictable public expenditure commitments and basic funding for PAs. The Project is taking efforts to ensure sustainable operations of the Fund. | No actions are required |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Continue Trust Fund capitalization efforts | The Project thanks the evaluators for this recommendation believing that this objective is the key one for attaining Indicator 17 under Outcome 5. At present, it is planned to elaborate the Strategic Plan of the Fund on the basis of which the Fundraising Strategy will be refined and implemented. | Elaborate Strategic Plan of the Fund.  Prepare and send a letter, on behalf of UNDP, to the GoK about potential ways to ensure Fund capitalisation or to provide assistance by the GoK in resource mobilization for the Biodiversity Conservation Fund.  Expand collaboration with international organizations and embassies functioning in Kazakhstan.  Work with national companies and people of Kazakhstan (various events and activities). | 15.07.2008  15.09.2008  15.11.2008    2008 | PIU,  Fund | Pending | On Jun 26-28 there will be a meeting of the Working Group (Advisory Board) of the Fund to elaborate the Strategic Plan of the Fun. Advisory Board includes representatives from leading ecological NGOs and government agencies of Kazakhstan. |
| 1. Align Trust Fund’s scope to include capacity to finance conservation initiatives nationally | The project highly appreciates this recommendation as it reconciles with the project activities carried out to date. Pursuant to the RoK Law on Non-Profit Organizations, the Biodiversity Conservation Fund was established as a Corporate Fund operating throughout Kazakhstan. Thus, the Fund has the mandate to fund conservation initiatives both at the national level and within project sites or specific regions of the country. | Legal registration of the Fun in accordance with the RoK legislation. | 04.10.2007 | PIU | Completed |  |
| 1. Began building technical capacity of Trust Fund to implement programming. | The project thanks the evaluators for this recommendation as technical capacity of the Trust Fund will be of crucial importance when implementing Fund’s programmes and projects. The project notes with satisfaction that in 2008 the project has executed contracts with experts for preparing 4 project proposals for the Fund (to be further submitted to donors). As the Strategic Plan is adopted, experts will be hired for each area of the Strategic Plan. Now the Fund has Director, Economist and Accountant. | Search for and recruitment of experts for preparing project proposals and programs in accordance with the Fund’s Strategic Plan.  Build up a database of experts. | 01.09.2008  15.11.2008 | PIU, Fund | Pending |  |
| 1. Re-assess the project’s implementation approach and adopt an improved multi-year implementation strategy/work plan that generates coordinated and precise interventions for alleviating threats and a clear path to attaining the project’s objective. | Throughout project implementation annual Wok Plans were prepared with regard to activities specified in the signed project document (Annex III Activities, Incremental Cost Analysis) as the project document reflects the long-term strategy of project implementation. In addition, the activities specified in the Work Plan are aimed at following Logframe for each outcome, which, as it is known, allow for improving/adjusting project management. Hence, we believe that the evaluators’ opinion for deviating in project activities and approaches from the project document as unwarranted.  However, the project agrees that some more targeted efforts are required to adopt an improved implementation strategy. | Prepare improved implementation strategy for 2009-2010, including project wind-up strategy  Review and approval of strategy by stakeholders  Prepare work plans with regard to the approved strategy (if required) | November 2008  November  2008  December 2008 and 2009 | PIU | Pending |  |
| 1. The improved implementation strategy/work plan should be fully vetted with the project’s national and local steering committees and their implementation support confirmed. | Work Plans are annually endorsed by the Project Steering Committee. Specifically project submits for discussion issues requiring support from Steering Committee members.  Draft of improved implementation strategy will be submitted to the Steering Committee for review. | Make decision for approval of implementation strategy for 2009-2010 | December 2008 | PIU | Pending |  |
| 1. Adopt implementation techniques that more fully integrate various components to approach conservation more holistically. | This recommendation is directly linked to the above recommendation and a part of the drafting exercise for the implementation strategy will be devoted to implementation techniques. | Include into improved implementation strategy |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Recruit short-term technical expertise to support full-time project staff, build capacities, and provide international best principles and practices to key project activities. | The project highly appreciates this recommendation as it reconciles with project efforts for implementing best international practices. Brian Watmough, England, worked on ecotourism development at AS project site for 6 months, Trevor Tanton, England (24 months) and Roverto Boltri (Italy) (12 months) worked on water resources in TK project site, Geoff Welch from RSPB worked on wetland planning and management (18 months). And the project contracted these international experts on mutually beneficial basis at different funding terms. In addition, the project gave due regard to the researches of international consultants on innovative fishery management approaches (William Sutton, Simon Diffy and Tomislav Petr).  The project plans to recruit an international consultant in sustainable hunting management for TK and a fishery consultant. | Select and recruit an international consultant in sustainable hunting management.  Select and recruit an international consultant in sustainable fishery management. | September – November  2008  2008 | PIU | Pending  Pending |  |
| 1. Retain the services of an international expert capable of assessing and supporting over-all project implementation approaches. | Contracting of an international Technical Advisor was provided for in the project document for the first two years. Til Dietrich from Germany worked in the project staff for 24 months to elaborate project implementation strategy.  Project staff has appropriate qualifications and motivation to carry out project mission. Therefore we believe that at this stage of project implementation it is advisable to contract international experts for specific project areas (legislation, hunting and fishery management). |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Develop very brief “stakeholder involvement strategies” for each project demonstration site, including formal mechanisms to improve participation of key resource users and linkages to public awareness activities. | This recommendation is closely related to Recommendation 11, ‘Develop a communication strategy to guide public awareness activities’. In general, the project agrees with the proposal to develop a brief stakeholder involvement strategy. | This will considered when developing Communication and Stakeholder Involvement Strategy specified in Recommendation 11. | November 2008 | PIU | Pending |  |
| 32. Extend project duration by one year | The project fully agrees with this recommendation. The reasons identified by the evaluators (delayed project commencing one year after the project document was signed, delays in establishment of a new PA in URD and expansion of 2 existing PAs) are true. It is true that project activities for operational support to the new PA in URD have been moved to the second to last year of project implementation.  A one-year extension will enhance strategic allocation of remaining funds without requiring significant costs for office services and allow for following to the logical end activities related to support to the new PA in URD and implementation of a microcrediting programme for developing alternative livelihoods and others.  At the same time we should note that project extension will depend on a range of circumstances. First of all, such circumstances include Fund capitalization as the project document determines that the grant will disbursed in three tranches if 1:3 ratio is met. Results of 2008 activities will also strongly affect project extension, as well as project implementation strategy for 2008-2009, including project wind-up strategy. | Make complete analysis on the basis of improved implementation strategy for 2009-2010  Prepare proposals on potential project extension with due consideration of financial arrangement and project wind-up strategy.  Submission of proposal to the Steering Committee | November 2008  December 2008  December 2008 | PIU | Pending |  |
| 33. Improve “Project Implementation Report” format and content. | The PIR was updated in June 2008 and submitted to GEF projects |  | June 2008 | GEF Secretary |  |  |
| 34. Increase frequency of on-site, external monitoring. | UNDP is highly appreciating the recommendation and going to increase frequency of external monitoring for new full size projects. | Inclusion of the conduction of additional external monitoring into the Work plan for 2009 should be submitted to SC for consideration. The evaluation will follow up the implementation of MTE’ recommendations and management response. | July 2008 | Project manager |  |  |
| 35. Improve MTE ratings system. | This recommendation is for GEF Secretariat attention . | The Management response will be submitted to GEF Secretariat | July 2008 | Adriana Dinu |  |  |

\* Unit(s) assigned to be responsible for the preparation of a management response will fill the columns under the management response section.

\*\* Unit(s) assigned to be responsible for the preparation of a management response will be updating the implementation status. Assigned with an oversight function monitors and verifies the implementation status.

\*\* \* **Status of Implementation:** Completed, Partially Completed, Pending