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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

**Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity**

**in the**

**Kazakhstani Sector**

**of the**

**Altai-Sayan Mountain Ecoregion**

ATLAS ID 44821 PIMS 2898



Photos © Phillip J. Edwards

**Final Report of the Mid-term Evaluation Mission**

**December 2009**

Dr. Phillip Edwards

**Acknowledgements**

The Mid-term Evaluator would like to thank all the staff and people connected with the Kazakhstan Altai Sayan Project who gave freely of their time and ideas to make the mid-term evaluation process a success. There are far too many people to mention by name – and hopefully everyone who contributed is included in the lists of names annexed to this report – but special mention must be made of the National Project Manager Vladimir Cheranev, who gave unstintingly of his time to try and answer every question I asked and to discuss the points I took every opportunity to raise. He was also responsible for organizing all of the in-country logistics, and thanks to his efforts the whole evaluation process ran like clockwork.

Following completion of the Draft Report on 14th November 2009, review comments were received in consolidated form from the PMU, the UNDP COs, and the Regional Coordination Unit in Bratislava on 10th December 2009. These comments have either been included into the revised text where these related to factual inaccuracies in the draft, or have been reproduced in full and unedited as footnotes to the appropriate text to ensure a fair hearing to all parties. The Mid-term Evaluator has made responses to some of the comments. I thank each of the reviewers sincerely for their efforts and insights which have undoubtedly improved this final report.

The views expressed in this report are intended to offer an overview of, and some of the lessons learned from, the Kazakhstan Altai Sayan Project as it enters its latter stages. I have tried to balance my thoughts and to offer fair perspectives of what was observed and learned from people more knowledgeable about the Project than I will ever be. My sincere apologies in advance if anyone should take anything written to be anything other than constructive criticism.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Olga Kokareva without whose linguistic skills none of this would have been possible, and who worked throughout despite nursing a head cold and a sore throat. Thanks are also due to Oksana Parshina and Ekaterina Lushina for acting as interpreters in Astana.

And finally, one of the delights of this sort of work remains coming to new and extremely welcoming countries and going home again having made new friends, seen new things, and witnessed with great admiration the dedication and enthusiasm that so many people bring to their work in conserving the important places of the world. I would like to wish them thanks and every success in their continuing endeavours.

|  |
| --- |
| Phillip Edwards  Steart, Somerset  England |

21st December 2009

# Acronyms and Terms

Currency of Kazakhstan is the Tenge (Ten-gé). At the time of the terminal evaluation, US$ 1 = KZT 150.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AWP | Annual Work Plan |
| BMU | Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Government of Germany |
| FHC | Forestry and Hunting Committee (of the Ministry of Agriculture) |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| ha | Hectare(s) |
| KKNP | Katon-Karagai National Park |
| KZT | Kazakhstan Tenge |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| METT | Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool |
| MOA | Ministry of Agriculture |
| MSP | Medium-sized Project |
| MTE | Mid-term evaluation |
| MTE | Mid-term evaluation Team |
| MZ | Markakol Zapovednik (State Reserve) |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| NPM | National Project Manager |
| PDF-A | Project Development Facility – Block A |
| PDF-B | Project Development Facility – Block B |
| PIR | Project Implementation Report |
| PIU | Project Implementation Unit |
| PSC | Project Steering Committee |
| SGP | Small Grants Programme |
| SPA | Special Protected Area |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNDP-CO | UNDP Country Office |
| US$ | United States Dollar |
| WWF | World Wide Fund for Nature |

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# Executive Summary

## Key Points

* *Project overall evaluated as* ***Marginally Satisfactory****.*
* *Implementation on the ground has been mixed and the implementation approach is evaluated as* ***Marginally Satisfactory****.*
* *Project stakeholder participation is good and has been evaluated as* ***Satisfactory.***
* *Project monitoring and evaluation is poor and has been evaluated as* ***Unsatisfactory****.*
* *The sustainability of the Project is difficult to assess since too little has yet been achieved on the ground. The financial and social sustainability appears strong but the institutional sustainability is mixed with the PAs being strengthened but little progress being made to establish the various local participative councils. Economically, most of the suggested pilot and livelihood projects look sound. Thus, sustainability has been evaluated as* ***Satisfactory****.*

**Key successes** – *significant progress made towards establishing new protected areas and the boundaries of existing ones are being adjusted to improve their long-term conservation effectiveness; a draft agreement on establishing a trans-boundary protected area with the Russian Federation is awaiting an imminent joint-signing; the designation “*ecological corridors*” included in the* Law of Protected Areas 2006 *is being implemented for the first time and draft legislation to this end is under consideration by the Government; legislative reforms are being introduced in concert with other GEF projects through a set of coordinated amendments that has been endorsed by the Government and is now obligatory for implementation; the operational capacity of the target PAs – Katon-Karagai National Park and Markakol Zapovednik – has been increased significantly through the provision of staff-training and equipment; co-financing has been obtained from the East Kazakhstan Oblast Akimat for a micro-credit facility; awareness of, and support for, biodiversity conservation and PAs is being increased among all stakeholders, albeit slowly because of difficult conditions; and a Council of Project Managers has been established to facilitate coordination amongst projects and dissemination of information.*

***Key problem areas*** *– questionable relevance regarding key new habitats protected and much of the proposed economic development; too little innovation over many of the aspects of the livelihood development proposals; poor communication internally and externally – the PIU is too remote from its target geographic area and needs a person(s) on the ground; a poorly functioning project implementation unit; and too little progress on certain key aspects of the Project – Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council[[1]](#footnote-1), the Local Community Conservation Councils, and the national training facility for PA managers and staff[[2]](#footnote-2).*

*The Mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the Project was conducted over a period of 26 days between 7th October and 14th November 2009 by a single international consultant. It was carried out effectively on schedule according to the Project programme, i.e. just four months after the mid-point of the five-year Project. The Evaluation’s ToR is given in* [*Annex I*](#_Annex_I_:_Mid-Term Evaluation Terms)*, its itinerary in* [*Annex II*](#_Annex_II_:_Itinerary of activities ) *and the list of people interviewed in* [*Annex III*](#_Annex_III_:_Persons Interviewed)*. A list of indicators, their mid-term status and expected end of Project achievement level, together with performance rating is given in* [*Annex IV*](#_Annex_IV_:)*. After a delay because the evaluator contracted swine flu, the draft report was submitted on 14th November and was finalised on 21st December 2009 after receipt of comments on 10th December.*

## Results

*[Output 1.1: New protected areas are established](#_Output_1.1:_Integrated_Land Use Spa) – Satisfactory. Four new protected areas are being established and the boundaries of existing ones are being adjusted to improve their long-term conservation effectiveness. One of the new PAs will be an “*ecological corridor*”, the first time this designation will be implemented in Kazakhstan.*

[*Output 1.2: Organizational structures, staffing standards and performance accountability are improved*](#_Output_1.2:_Organizational_structur) *– Marginally Satisfactory. Review and analysis of legislative, institutional and individual capacity completed. Financial analysis conducted. Significant training undertaken. More work on management performance accountability required.*

[*Output 1.3: Operational capacity of PAs is enhanced*](#_Output_1.3:_Operational_capacity of) *– Satisfactory. Expert support and training provided in developing management plans. Significant equipment provided to PA authorities.*

[*Output 1.4: Biodiversity information in PAs is improved*](#_Output_1.4:_Biodiversity_informatio) *– Marginally Satisfactory. Baseline inventories of key and monitoring species carried out, GIS databases under preparation; ecosystem-based monitoring programme now needs developing.*

[*Output 2.1: Project communications strategy is developed and implemented*](#_Output_2.1:_Project_communications ) *– Marginally Satisfactory. Good Communication Strategy prepared, if a little method-centric. Awareness raised about the Project through information campaign.*

[*Output 2.2: Biodiversity awareness raising programme is developed and implemented*](#_Output_2.2:_Biodiversity_awareness )  *– Marginally Satisfactory. Two key campaigns run – one on the conservation of rare and threatened species of flora and fauna in the Kazakhstan part of the Altai-Sayan Eco-region; and one on fire prevention.*

[*Output 2.3: Visitor/community information centres are established*](#_Output_2.3:_Visitor/community_infor) *– Marginally Satisfactory. A feasibility study for reconstructing the Visitor Centre in Katon-Karagai National Park has been prepared.[[3]](#footnote-3)*

[*Output 3.1: Essential enabling legislative and regulatory reforms are facilitated*](#_Output_3.1:_Essential_enabling legi) *– Satisfactory. Necessary legislative amendments are being introduced in concert with other GEF projects through a coordinated set of amendments that has been endorsed by the Government and is now obligatory for implementation*

[*Output 3.2: Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council is established*](#_Output_3.2:_Oblast_Akimat PA Adviso) *– Not evaluated. Changed to* Legal mechanisms for improved collaboration between all stakeholders at the local level on SPA related issues are established *in the Inception Report – see footnote 13*.

[*Output 3.3: Trans-boundary collaboration agreements and conservation programs are formulated and implemented*](#_Output_3.3:_Trans-boundary_collabor) *– Marginally Satisfactory. A draft agreement on establishing a trans-boundary protected area with the Russian Federation is awaiting an imminent joint-signing.*

[*Output 4.1: Sustainable alternative livelihood options are facilitated through demonstration projects*](#_Output_4.1:_Sustainable_alternative) *– Marginally Unsatisfactory. A small grants programme developed to provide funds for demonstration projects to address the key threats to biodiversity and the inefficient use of natural resources. Relevance of at least half the demonstration projects is questionable. A micro-credit facility has been establish and the first loans are under consideration. The facility s funded by the regional government but the interest rates and requirements for collateral are onerous and will curtail its effectiveness.*

[*Output 4.2: Programme for SPA based sustainable tourism will be developed and implemented*](#_Output_4.2:_Ecology_and guide/range) *– Unsatisfactory. Progress on this Output appears slow and confused – the objects need clarification.*

[*Output 4.3: Local NGOs supported*](#_Output_4.3:_Local_NGOs are supporte) *– Marginally Satisfactory. One local environment-oriented NGO registered and supported.[[4]](#footnote-4)*

[*Output 4.4: Local Community Conservation Councils are established*](#_Output_4.4:_Local_Community Conserv) *– Marginally Unsatisfactory. Very little has been carried out in progressing this Output – but see footnote 24.*

[*Output 5.1: M&E and adaptive management applied to project*](#_Output_5.1:_M&E_and adaptive manage) *– Marginally Unsatisfactory. Very poor internal and impact monitoring; fairly good adaptive management.*

[*Output 5.2: Lessons learned and best practices are replicated at the national level using a national PA management training facility*](#_Output_5.2:_Lessons_learned and bes) *– Unsatisfactory. Good facilitation framework for dissemination established but no progress discernible towards the establishment of a national training facility for PA managers and staff.[[5]](#footnote-5)*

## Key Issues

*This Project has made considerable progress towards achieving some of its aims, particularly those involving the establishment of new protected areas and the transboundary reserve with the Russian Federation. Similarly, moves to amend the legislation to strengthen biodiversity conservation and operation of the protected areas have been coordinated with other GEF projects and accepted for implementation by the Government of Kazakhstan. The operational capability of the two target protected areas – Katon-Karagai National Park and Markakol Zapovednik – have been raised greatly by training and provision of equipment, and these efforts are continuing along with activities to increase the available sources of financing. All of these issues fall largely within the expertise of the national project manger and, given the good country buy-in, could be expected to be well-implemented. The Project is doing less well in areas concerning protected areas that are effectively new concepts within the country, e.g. the Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council[[6]](#footnote-6), the Local Community Conservation Councils, and the national training facility for PA managers and staff. All of these appear to have been placed on the back-burner because they are difficult to realise – a major error in implementation strategy. If they are new and difficult, they will need more time and so should have been tackled head-on from the outset. In addition, implementation of the activities concerning the development of alternative livelihoods are slow and weak, with major questions over their relevance.*

*The Project is also suffering from poor communications – externally because the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) is far too remote geographically from the Project area; and internally because of significant problems within the PIU itself. While the PIU has rightly been based in the nearest city to the Project area, i.e. Ust-Kamenogorsk, this is still too far from the Project area to be effective without having at least one person based on the ground permanently. This needs to be rectified urgently. The problems within the PIU will be much more difficult to remedy, based as they are in a deep distrust between manager and staff, and difficult interpersonal relations between the staff themselves. A number of basic management functions relating to planning, information exchange, and monitoring and evaluation are also limiting its effectiveness and efficiency. Increased support from the UNDP Country Office will help.*

[Recommendations](#_Recommendations) *and* [Lessons Learned](#_Lessons_Learned) *are listed on pages 43-44.*

# Approach and Methodology

The Monitoring and Evaluation Policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has two overarching objectives, namely to promote accountability for the achievement of GEF objectives through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes and performance of the partners involved in GEF activities; and to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners, as basis for decision-making on policies, strategies, programme management, and projects and to improve knowledge and performance. With this in mind, this Mid-term evaluation (MTE) was initiated by UNDP Kazakhstan as the GEF Implementation Agency for the *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Kazakhstani Sector of the Altai-Sayan Mountain Ecoregion Project* to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of Project activities in relation to the stated objectives, and to collate lessons learned.

The MTE was conducted over a period of 26 days between 7th October and 14th November 2009 by a single international consultant. It was carried out effectively on schedule according to the Project programme, i.e. just four months after the mid-point of the five-year Project. The approach was determined by the terms of reference ([Annex I](#_Annex_I_:)) which were closely followed, via the itinerary detailed in [Annex II](#_Annex_II_:). Throughout the evaluation, particular attention was paid to explaining carefully the importance of listening to stakeholders’ views and in reassuring staff and stakeholders that the purpose of the evaluation was not to judge performance in order to apportion credit or blame but to measure the relative success of implementation and to determine learn lessons for the wider GEF context. Wherever possible, information collected was cross-checked between various sources to ascertain its veracity, but in some cases time limited this. A list of people interviewed in given in [Annex III](#_Annex_III_:). After a delay because the evaluator contracted swine flu, the draft report was submitted on 14th November and was finalised on 21st December 2009 after receipt of comments on 10th December, which have been added as footnotes to the main text.

Full details of the objectives of the MTE can be found in the ToR ([Annex I](#_Annex_I_:_Mid-Term Evaluation Terms)), but the evaluation has concentrated on assessing the concept and design of the Project, its implementation in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs, and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out, and the objectives and outcomes achieved. Particular attention has been given to the likely sustainability of its results. The MTE was constrained partially by the absence of a national consultant who would have been able to read many of the Project’s reports. However, the MTE was able to meet most key stakeholders if sometimes a little too briefly and without the opportunity for any follow-up meetings, but the mission was not deemed to have been affected unduly.

Wherever possible the MTE has tried to evaluate issues according to the criteria listed in the *UNDP-GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*, namely:

* Relevance – the extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time.
* Effectiveness – the extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it is to be achieved.
* Efficiency – the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible.
* Results – the positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects produced by a development intervention. In GEF terms, results include direct project outputs, short-to medium term outcomes, and longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other, local effects.
* Sustainability – the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.

The MTE has evaluated the Project’s performance against the logframe according to the current six-point evaluation criteria provided to it by the GEF. This is reproduced in Table 1 for clarity.

**Table 1: Criteria used to evaluate the Project by the Mid-term evaluation Team**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Highly Satisfactory (HS)** | Project is expected to achieve or exceed **all** its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”. |
| **Satisfactory (S)** | Project is expected to achieve **most** of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings. |
| **Marginally Satisfactory (MS)** | Project is expected to achieve **most** of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve **some** of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits. |
| **Marginally Unsatisfactory (MU)** | Project is expected to achieve **some** of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only **some** of its major global environmental objectives. |
| **Unsatisfactory (U)** | Project is expected **not** to achieve **most** of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits**.** |
| **Highly Unsatisfactory (U)** | The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, **any** of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits. |

The results of the evaluation were conveyed to UNDP, the Forestry and Hunting Committee , and the National Project Manager at a de-briefing meeting held on 23rd October prior to the MTE’s departure (see [Annex V](#_Annex_V_:_List of Persons Present a)).

# Project Concept and Design

Paragraph 127 of the Project Document provides a concise and coherent summary of the Project’s design history and associated rationale:

“*During the project preparation several alternatives were considered for the project design. As the project represents one integral element of a tri-national initiative involving complementary biodiversity conservation projects in Mongolia, Russia and Kazakhstan, in 2001, PDF-B funds were provided to Russia and Kazakhstan for the development of a single bi-national GEF project that would complement the project in Mongolia. In the course of the PDF-B, however, primarily on account of differences in the time of commencement of PDF-B activities in Russia and Kazakhstan, it was decided that two national projects should be developed and submitted to the GEF with explicit integrated trans-boundary elements incorporated into each of them. The PDF-B process resulted in the development of a full-size project in Russia, which was approved in 2004, and in the detailed analysis of threats and the definition of required initiatives to conserve globally significant biodiversity in the Kazakhstani sector of the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion. While it was originally envisaged that a medium-sized GEF project would be developed for the Kazakhstani part of the eco-region, the assessment conducted during the PDF-B, indicated that the complex systemic and institutional capacity barriers to effective biodiversity conservation in Kazakhstan cannot be addressed by a MSP. Moreover, an MSP would not have permitted a realistic strengthening of Kazakhstan’s national protected area system. Thus, a request for PDF-A funding was subsequently prepared and approved for the development of a full size project to enhance the sustainability and conservation effectiveness of Kazakhstan’s National PA system through demonstrating sustainable and replicable approaches to conservation management in the protected areas in the Kazakhstani sector of Altai-Sayan ecoregion*.”

There is very little to say about the Project’s design. It is very pragmatic and simple in its approach, addressing the five barriers identified head-on through four building blocks thus:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Barrier** | **Outcome** |
| Conflicting policy framework for biodiversity conservation | Strengthening the legislation and cross-border ties |
| Incomplete protected area coverage  Inadequate institutional capacity  Information deficiencies | Expanding the area under protection and enhancing management effectiveness |
| - | Raising awareness and support for biodiversity conservation |
| Negative cost/benefits imposed by conservation upon communities | Developing economic livelihoods to support conservation |

while a fifth output allows for the all-important replication at national level. The links between the outcomes are inherent rather than being explicit the design requires some interpretation of approach by those implementing the Project – something that is not yet apparent at the mid-term since there has been a tendency to follow the Project Document slavishly (see paragraphs 77 and 81).

One point of criticism is that in the description of the environmental global significance, six species are listed as being on the IUCN Red List, namely snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*),Altai argali (*Ovis ammon*), red wolf (*Cuon alpinus*), white-tailed eagle (*Haliaetus albicilla*),[[7]](#footnote-7) imperial eagle(*Aquila heliaca*), and hooded crane(*Grus monacha*),[[8]](#footnote-8) but thereafter the Document concentrates on the first two exclusively. The logframe includes these two plus the imperial eagle and a species not on the Red List – black stork (*Ciconia nigra*)[[9]](#footnote-9) without any indication as to why these were selected over the other Red List species or, in the case of black stork, over more localised ones such as Altai Snowcock (*Tetraogallus altaicus*) or those indicative of forest health e.g. white-backed woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*), three-toed woodpecker, or beech (stone) marten (*Martes foina*). A corollary to this is that the species selected as indicators for this project are essentially meaningless in terms of indicating the Project’s impacts. Both mammals are extremely rare and elusive and inhabit extremely rugged mountainous terrain, and neither the manpower nor the methods are available to obtain accurate population estimates of them. While the Project has undertaken training in new survey methods of snow leopard and argali, this means that these methods rather than any real population increases may eventually be at the heart of any reported increases. The two bird species selected (imperial eagle and black stork) are trans-continental migrants – therefore any number of factors during their journeys or on their wintering grounds may be at the root of any changes perceived rather than project activities.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Two points in the discussion on barriers are worthy of particular comment. The first and most important is that in paragraph 51 it makes explicitly clear that there must be a link made between the economic development fostered by a project and the principle of biodiversity conservation:

“*Unless the conservation of biodiversity provides greater economic gains than its exploitation, then there is little likelihood that people will be motivated to protect it. Conservation of biodiversity must become a matter of personal self-interest*.”

This extremely important point is so often missing from UNDP-GEF projects and as a result the economic development side is treated as, and seen by the stakeholders/beneficiaries as, just another foreign aid project whose aim is to provide a catalyst to development to relieve poverty, when in fact a GEF project has conservation as its aim and is using economic development merely as a tool to alter behaviours. With the link being stated so explicitly and strongly here there would seem to be no possibility that it could be ignored and yet, as will be seen, sadly the principle has again been overlooked in the rush to tick boxes rather than to understand and address the key issues – see paragraph 66.

The second point, and perhaps the most innovative idea in the Project’s design in relation to Kazakhstan’s protected areas, is that local communities are not involved currently in the management of PAs or biodiversity conservation in the project area and that:

“*There is … a need to involve local communities in PA management directly through the offering of employment opportunities and the provision of appropriate training in various management capacities. Likewise, existing legislation must be revised to ensure that local communities must be directly and meaningfully involved in PA decision-making*.”

Again, sadly, at the mid-point of implementation, the Project appears to have largely ignored this key idea largely on the basis of the fact that there are no mechanisms to achieve this. It will be a very large missed opportunity for Kazakhstan’s PAs if no substantive progress is achieved to this end – see paragraphs 61 and 66.

The following are the key objectives formulated for the Project:

Goal

*To help secure the globally significant biodiversity values of the Kazakhstan.*

Objective

*To enhance the sustainability and conservation effectiveness of Kazakhstan’s National PA system through demonstrating sustainable and replicable approaches to conservation management in the protected areas in the Kazakhstani sector of the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion.*

Outcome 1

*SPAs network is expanded and PAs management efficiency is improved.*

Outcome 2

*Awareness level among the public in the field of biodiversity conservation and PAs is increased and support in all levels within PAs’ work on biodiversity conservation is rendered.*

Outcome 3

*Existing legal and institutional framework is enhanced for the purpose of the PAs system strengthening.*

Outcome 4

*Involving of local communities in activities on biodiversity conservation and alternative livelihoods within PAs and buffer zones are being supported.*

Outcome 5

*Monitoring and evaluation of the project activities are carried out. Cooperation between SPAs is established, the Project positive results and experience are introduced within PAs' work of the RK.*

# Project Implementation

Paragraph 7 shows that the Project concept was originally for a regional project in 2001, and that during the PDF-B for that concept, it was split, the Kazakhstan component being separated as a Medium-sized Project (MSP). However, it became clear that an MSP was not going to be enough to address the issues in the Kazakhstani part of the Altai-sayan but replenishment issues meant a delay in seeking sufficient funds. Therefore, the PDF-A was submitted to GEFSec on 2nd June 2005 and became operational on 2nd August 2005. GEF CEO approval into the GEF pipeline was obtained on 20th December 2005, but again because of financial considerations, GEFSec deferred the inclusion of biodiversity proposals in the January 2006 Work Programme until the June Council meeting. Following receipt of, and responses to, comments, GEF CEO endorsement was received on 26th September 2006 as a Full-sized Project under Operational Programme #4 – Mountain Ecosystems and as part of Strategic Priority Biodiversity #1 “*Catalyzing sustainability of Protected Areas*” of the GEF Business Plan. UNDP-GEF signed the Project Document with the Government of Kazakhstan on 10th January 2007, thereby commencing the Project. First disbursements were made on 27th January. Project inception workshops were organized and the Inception Report was produced in August 2007.

Implementation of the Project so far appears to have been fairly efficient and effective. Notwithstanding the difficulties faced by a project team in implementing such a project in remote areas, in difficult climatic conditions particularly in winter where snow closes many roads for months at a time and temperatures can fall to minus 30oC, and where the low capacity of hired consultants and locals also hamper progress, the team have worked hard towards progressing many of their targets (and many end-of-project indicators appear achievable) while simultaneously building trust and respect amongst the stakeholders. The Project’s design and funding is heavily biased towards Outcome 1, so perhaps it is no surprise that most effort, and therefore progress, appears to have been directed towards this, somewhat at the expense of the others the MTE believes. Sadly the team members are not a harmonious unit and significant tensions are apparent which, while not seeming to have stopped progress, undoubtedly have led to slower implementation than might otherwise have occurred; have hampered communication and presence on the ground; and have led to concerns over relevance of project actions and lack of innovation. As a result, the implementation approach is evaluated as **Marginally Satisfactory**.

## Participating Agencies

The project has been executed under the National Execution (NEX) modality, through the **Ministry of Agriculture** (MOA), and implemented by the **Forestry and Hunting Committee (FHC)** of the same Ministry. The Ministry authorised UNDP to enter into contractual arrangements with physical and legal persons on their behalf, and to make direct payments against all categories of the project budget, and to manage project funds, including budget planning, monitoring, revisions, disbursements, record keeping, reporting and auditing that all observe UNDP rules. Thus, the Project has been executed in accordance with the standard rules and procedures of the UNDP NEX modality but with direct payments (thereby UNDP is acting as a business agent to provide those services).

Project oversight has been undertaken at the strategic level by a **Project Steering** **Committee** (PSC). This comprises ten members drawn exclusively from national and oblast government stakeholders (see [Annex VI](#_Annex_VI_:_List of Project Steering)), chaired by the First vice-chairman of the Forestry and Hunting Committee, Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Igor Koval, and with secretariat services provided by the PIU.

Financing contributions are from GEF (US$ 2,421,000) with cash co-financing (UNDP-managed) from the Government of Germany (US$ 2,418,000) and UNDP (US$ 40,000), cash co-financing (partner-managed) from the Government of Kazakhstan (US$ 9,213,000), Eco-Altai (Private Sector) (US$ 45,000), Guardians of Altai (NGO) (US$ 12,000), and in-kind co-financing from the Government of Kazakhstan (US$ 6,400,000), Ecology Tourist Centre (NGO) (US$ 187,000), Eco-Altai (Private Sector) (US$ 160,000), ZUBR Consulting Centre (Private Sector) (US$ 152,000), Guardians of Altai (NGO) (US$ 63,000), “Ecobiocentre” (Private Sector) (US$ 57,000), and UN Agency (US$ 10,000) – total US$ 21.178 million.

The Project works closely with, and through, a large number of key local stakeholders including national and local government agencies; the akims and akimats at oblast, rayon, and rural district levels; protected areas staffs; NGOs; schools and libraries, village organizations and individuals. Contracts have also been placed by open tender with a number of academic institutions and national and local experts. The Project has highlighted local participation as a priority and is working hard to win over a somewhat apathetic public, but delivery of benefits and engagement in processes are both a little slow. In particular, the remoteness of the region and the lack of Project personnel on the ground are limiting exchanges of information and mixed messages are resulting. While all concerned show some knowledge about the Project[[11]](#footnote-11), there is a lack of consistency and significantly a lack of understanding of how actions link to the Project’s biodiversity aims. As a result, the MTE evaluates stakeholder participation as **Marginally** **Satisfactory**.

## National Level Arrangements

### Project Direction

Overall guidance and coordination of the project implementation has been the responsibility of the **National Project Director** (NPD), a part-time position held since the Project’s inception by Mr. Kairat Ustemirov, Head of the Forest and Protected Areas Department of the Committee for Forest and Hunting. The NPD is a state employee designated by the National Executing Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan. It is an unpaid position covered by the Government’s in-kind contribution to the Project. The NPD is accountable to the National Executing Agency and UNDP for the production of the Project outputs, appropriate use of the Project resources, and coordination of the Project with other programmes and projects implemented in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the area of biodiversity protection and management.

### Project Management

Day-to-day implementation has been the responsibility of the **Project Implementation Unit** (PIU), the office of which is housed in rented accommodation in Ust-Kamenogorsk. The PIU has comprised a full-time **National Project Manager** (NPM) and up to a maximum of six project staff. The position of NPM has been held by two persons, thus:

Mr. Iskander Mirkhashimov – January 2007 to May 2007.

Mr. Vladimir Cheranev – July 2007 to present.

Unfortunately there was no overlap in transition between the two NPMs and the MTE could garner no hard evidence on the performance of the first, other than to note he left for “personal reasons”. Mr. Cheranev commands considerable respect both within the national and government hierarchy and seemingly amongst local people, which is a boon for any project, and is a competent if slightly inexperienced project manager. However, there are deep divisions between him and the staff within the PIU over management style and approach, and significant inter-personal tensions between all concerned mean that the team lack harmony and hence efficiency and effectiveness (see paragraph 76). The main sub-components of the Project have been dealt with largely on a modular basis through the four task leaders and/or a number of specialists hired to assist them. Some tasks have been managed directly by the NPM, and full technical oversight and supervision has been retained by him, perhaps too tightly which may be the root of many of the problems. Project staffing has also not been continuous with turnover and gaps prevalent for some posts, thus:

Biodiversity and Protected Area Expert – Agadyl Sundutpayev : Jan 2007- Dec 2008

– Dina Almatova : August 2009 - present

Social Expert – Olga Klimanova : Jan 2007 - present

Economics Expert – Meruyert Sarsembayeva :Jan 2007 - present

PR and Awareness-building Expert – Rosa Kumargazhina : Jan-Dec 2007

– Natalia Blokh : June 2008 - present

The Project’s management and implementation have closely followed the logframe throughout. In August 2007, the Project’s Inception Report was published, which made only minor changes to the wording of the Project Document. Significantly, a number of minor changes were proposed to the logframe, e.g. “*Output 2.3 – Visitor/community information centres are* *established*” was moved to “*Output 4.4 – Visitor centres based on existing Nature Museums at two PAs are established*”; “*Output 3.2 – Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council is established*” was changed to “*Output 3.2. – Legal mechanisms for improved collaboration between all stakeholders at the local level on SPA related issues are established*”; and “*Output 4.2 – Ecology and guide/ranger training camps for children and youth respectively are organized and operated*” was changed to “*Output 4.2 – Program for SPA based sustainable tourism will be developed and implemented*”, and yet none of these changes have actually been instigated, the Project continuing to follow the logframe in the original Project Document. No reason is apparent[[12]](#footnote-12). The Inception Report also reviews changes to the operating environment and crucially notes that in relation to Katon-Karagai National Park that:

“*Since the coordination and signature of the project took some time, the project site Berkutaul, which in the project document was identified as an additional site for inclusion into the KKNP, was already included. The total current KKNP area is 643,477 ha. Thus, the KKNP will not be expanded over the project period (Outcome 1 Output 1.1.). Within this output the project will focus on identification of the functional zones of the KKNP* …”

and in relation to Markakol Zapovednik, that:

“*During the period of project coordination and signature, one site (Kaljir) was already included into the Reserve, though the official procedure is not yet completed. Thus, within Outcome 1 Output 1.1. the project will focus on the rest 3* [sic] *sites to gain the protection status*.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

As a result, the Project’s indicators were altered to accommodate this. The original logframe from the Project Document with five Outcomes, 16 Outputs, and 17 indicators (but with indicator 3 altered to allow for changes in the operating environment) has been used throughout as the basis for the evaluation (see [Annex IV](#_Annex_IV_:)).

### The “German Project”

The PIU has been given another project to implement concurrently, with only extremely limited additional management assets. Funding of US$ 2.5 million from the German Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) was made available for a project under the climate change initiative to be bolted on to an existing GEF project using its existing infrastructure and the Kazakhstan Altai-Sayan Ecoregion Project was seen as the ideal partner. It was seen as complementary to the main Project since it included work in the West Altai Zapovednik which was originally in the design concept for the main Project back in 2001 but was cut as the Project was developed. The additional project was designed by UNDP, and the Governments of Germany and Kazakhstan but also involved input from the main UNDP-GEF Project’s NPM when discussing the list of works to be implemented. This project had three aims:

1. development of protected areas in the Altai-Sayan region – which established the Tarbagataiski Zapovednik and a green corridor;
2. eliminating the threat of fires in the Altai-Sayan region – through provision of fire-fighting equipment, an operational management plan for fire-fighting, and running fire prevention campaigns; and
3. design of a programme for adaptation to climate change.

The PIU implemented this additional project by considering it to be Outcome 6 of the main UNDP-GEF Project. While 80% of the money was for procurement of equipment (fire-fighting vehicles, radio equipment, clothing) and civil works (fire station), this has involved development of new procedures at regional level and hence has been time consuming and slow. The Project promoted its existing Financial and Administrative Assistant to Procurement Specialist to work on all procurements over US$ 2,500 and hired a new Financial and Administrative Assistant. All the management responsibility, however, has had to be shouldered by the existing NPM with an inevitable slowing in the progress made by the main project despite his significantly increased working hours. This additional work was originally due to commence in January 2008 and run for 18 months (completion date June 2009) but approval was delayed and the project set back to February 2009-July 2010. Two activities[[14]](#footnote-14) remain outstanding and these are now due for completion in August 2010. All reporting has been carried out separately and there has been no mixing of the indicators. While there is some overlap between the aims of the two Projects, such flagrant use of an existing project’s management in order to reduce another project’s management costs and increase its apparent cost-effectiveness should in the future be resisted since there is no such thing as “free management”. The UNDP-GEF Project has clearly been adversely affected, suffering direct delays and increased stress on it management leading to indirect effects as a result. The MTE has not made any attempt to evaluate the implementation of the “German Project” since it is outside its TOR, other than to look at the implications for the implementation of the UNDP-GEF Project.

### Project Progress and Financial Assessment

Total disbursement of funds to the Project up to the end of August 2009 amounted to US$ 1,455,357 (see Table 2). If Project spending can be taken as a crude measure of the progress of implementation, then the Project is apparently achieving the progress originally envisaged, since this sum represents 56.5% of the budget projected in the Inception Report, at what is effectively the halfway point. However, as Table 3 shows, this expenditure is actually below that expected since funding is skewed away from the front-end of the Project (see budgets in Table 4), and then only 77.3% of the budget for the period January 2007-August 2009 has actually been disbursed. Furthermore, expenditure has not been even across the various outcomes. Expenditure (and by corollary progress) on Outcome 3 (strengthening the enabling environment) is extremely low at just 32% of budget for the period and 18% for the projections for the full project period; while that for Outcome 4 (community involvement and opportunities for sustainable alternative livelihoods) is also significantly behind schedule at only 64% of the budget for the period (Table 3). Although the latter is significantly higher than for Outcome 3, the ramifications are perhaps of greater concern since the involvement of the local communities is probably a more pressing issue, and given that time is a major requirement for the development of alternative livelihoods, that this aspect of the Project is running behind schedule is worrying. On the other hand, levels of expenditure under Outcome 5 (M&E, dissemination of lessons learned) appear at 97% of budget to be artificially high given that very little progress appears to have been made under this outcome (see paragraphs 62-64). The MTE had no time to investigate this issue, but wonders whether other project costs, e.g. project management activities, travel costs, are being lumped into this outcome (as has happened in a number of other projects) and hence recommends a review of accounting practices be undertaken. It may be that any revisions to the allocation of costs can be made only for the current accounting year, since previous years will have been closed by Atlas, but the MTE believes that this will still provide a truer picture to better reflect the progress made and costs incurred by each outcome, thereby providing for better future management decisions.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The MTE recommends** that the PIU/UNDP reviews the accounting procedures with regard to project management costs and those activities attributed to Outcome 5 to ensure accurate reporting and to provide for better future management decisions. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| PIU/UNDP | Review accounting procedures within the PIU and reallocate costs as necessary, particularly those relating to Outcome 5. | Prior to close of year-end accounts or by Feb 2010. | Adjusted accounts. |
| UNDP | Advise the PIU on the limits allowed for any reallocation, any time limits involved, and sign off as necessary on any reallocations made. | As required. | Assistance to ensure compatibility with UN accounting procedures. |

**Table 2: Total disbursement of funds by output by source\* to 31st August 2009 (US$) against full project budget as per Inception Report (figures rounded)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **GEF** | | | **UNDP** | | | **Total** | | |
| **Budget** | **Actual** | **%** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **%** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **%** |
| Outcome 1 | 913,982 | 577,085 | 63.1 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 913,982 | 577,085 | 63.1 |
| Outcome 2 | 402,182 | 207,054 | 51.5 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 402,182 | 207,054 | 51.5 |
| Outcome 3 | 103,000 | 18,644 | 18.1 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 103,000 | 18,644 | 18.1 |
| Outcome 4 | 601,435 | 321,306 | 53.4 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 601,435 | 321,306 | 53.4 |
| Outcome 5 | 517,269 | 313,246 | 60.6 | 40,000 | 18,023 | 45.1 | 557,269 | 331,268 | 59.4 |
| **Total** | **2,537,868** | **1,437,334** | **56.6** | **40,000** | **18,023** | **45.1** | **2,577,868** | **1,455,357** | **56.5** |

\* Table excludes co-funding.

Source: PIU from Atlas.

Note: it is outside the scope of the MTE to verify independently the financial figures contained in any of the tables and figures presented here through an audit.

**Table 3: Total disbursement of GEF funds by output to 31st August 2009 (US$) against project budget for the same period as per Inception Report (figures rounded)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Budget** | **Actual** | **%** |
| Outcome 1 | 724,482 | 577,085 | 79.7 |
| Outcome 2 | 251,182 | 207,054 | 82.4 |
| Outcome 3 | 58,300 | 18,644 | 32.0 |
| Outcome 4 | 503,935 | 321,306 | 63.8 |
| Outcome 5 | 321,469 | 313,246 | 97.4 |
| **Total** | **1,859,368** | **1,437,334** | **77.3** |

Source: PIU from Atlas.

Table 4 gives the figures for the disbursement of GEF funds by Outcome against budget in half-yearly periods for the Project so far. Figure 1 illustrates these figures as a percentage of budget disbursed in each period by Outcome, and Figure 2 shows the same but cumulatively. These Figures illustrate a number of points:

1. that extraordinarily there has been no latent start-up where disbursement has run at levels markedly lower than expected. This common pattern appears to have been supplanted in this case by fairly high levels of spending relative to the budget from the outset, and in part due to good design which anticipated and allowed for delays in the inception period by budgeting relatively low levels of spend in the first six months – see Table 4 (US$ 93,345 in first six months, US$ 226,500 in second six months, US$ 507,375 in third, etc.);
2. significant decreases in the levels of disbursement during the six-month period January-June 2008 for reasons that are not obviously apparent although which do not appear seasonal since there is no such dip in the corresponding period January-June 2009. Perhaps this can be attributed to start-up work on the “German Project”. It is noticeable that during this period, high levels of expenditure were incurred on Outcome 5 (see paragraph 24 above);
3. expenditure on Outcome 3 is low throughout. The apparent extremely high and low expenditures in 2007 are simply an artefact of a large payment budgeted for July-December being made in January-June. Notwithstanding this, and the low budgets attributed to this Outcome, disbursements (and therefore progress) are very low.

**Table 4: Total disbursement of GEF funds (US$) by output by half-year against budget as per inception report**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Jan-Jun 2007** | | | **Jul-Dec 2007** | | | **Jan-Jun 2008** | | | **Jul-Dec 2008** | | | **Jan-Jun 2009** | | |
| **Budget** | **Actual** | **%** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **%** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **%** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **%** | **Budget** | **Actual** | **%** |
| Outcome 1 | 13,960 | 20,625 | 147.7 | 104,920 | 94,563 | 90.1 | 278,671 | 76,365 | 27.4 | 110,456 | 217,496 | 196.9 | 181,076 | 168,036 | 92.8 |
| Outcome 2 | 10,190 | 12,232 | 120.0 | 27,360 | 26,883 | 98.3 | 59,194 | 27,134 | 45.8 | 68,664 | 68,253 | 99.4 | 47,384 | 72,550 | 153.1 |
| Outcome 3 | 1,500 | 11,640 | 776.0 | 12,000 | 228 | 1.9 | 13,800 | 5,157 | 37.4 | 7,000 | 1,439 | 20.6 | 1,000 | 179 | 17.9 |
| Outcome 4 | 22,730 | 23,383 | 102.9 | 44,660 | 57,930 | 129.7 | 93,720 | 44,112 | 47.1 | 161,220 | 109,648 | 68.0 | 84,208 | 86,232 | 102.4 |
| Outcome 5 | 44,965 | 43,509 | 96.8 | 37,561 | 38,088 | 101.4 | 61,990 | 74,637 | 120.4 | 81,260 | 57,138 | 70.3 | 63,758 | 99,874 | 156.6 |
| **Total** | **93,345** | **111,389** | **119.3** | **226,501** | **217,693** | **96.1** | **507,375** | **227,406** | **44.8** | **428,600** | **453,974** | **105.9** | **377,426** | **426,872** | **113.1** |

Source: PIU from Atlas.

**Figure 1: Percentage disbursement of GEF funds (US$) by output by half-year to June 2009 against budget as per inception report**



Source: PIU from Atlas.

**Figure 2: Cumulative percentage disbursement of GEF funds (US$) by output by half-year to June 2009 against budget as per inception report**



Source: PIU from Atlas.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

### Internal Project M&E

Project monitoring and evaluation has been evaluated as **Unsatisfactory**. Monitoring and evaluation of Project activities have been undertaken in varying detail at three levels:

1. Progress monitoring
2. Internal activity monitoring
3. Impact monitoring

Progress monitoring is good and has been made through quarterly and annual reports to the UNDP-CO. The annual work plans for the Project are worked out together with inputs from the UNDP-CO and are submitted to the PSC and to UNDP for formal approval. The quarterly reports provide updates on delivery projections, the status of planned activities, the products completed, problems incurred, and an outline of the activities planned for the following quarter. Neither of these report formats contain quantitative estimates of project progress, just qualitative assessments of progress made. The quarterly reports take two forms – a narrative report direct to the UNDP-CO in a standard format used by the UNDP Kazakhstan office, and also a draft of the Quarterly Operational Report (150-word fixed-format) which is then edited by the CO before being forwarded to the UNDP/GEF Regional Coordination Unit in Bratislava, which in turn sends it to the HQ and to GEF. The UNDP-CO also generates its own Combined Delivery Reports which include financial information generated from Atlas which are signed off by the national counterparts from the Ministry of Agriculture and the UNDP-CO. These expenditure records, together with Atlas disbursement records of direct payments, serve as a basis for expenditure monitoring and budget revisions, the latter usually taking place twice yearly approximately in July and November following the disbursement progress and changes in the operational work plan.

The major findings and observations of all these reports are given in an annual report covering the period July to June, the Project Implementation Report (PIR), which is submitted to UNDP-CO, UNDP Regional Coordination Unit, and UNDP HQ for review and official comments, followed by final submission to GEF. At the time of the MTE, one had been sent covering the January 2007-June 2008 (there is no requirement to send one if a project is under eight months old when the first report is due) while that for 2008/2009 was still being readied for approval. The Project also sends an Annual Project Report (APR) covering a calendar year to the Ministry of Agriculture through the Project Director, and provides these as well as implementation status reports on specific activities to the local government authorities upon request. Project risk assessment is updated quarterly together by the NPM and the UNDP-CO, and any critical risk present for two consecutive quarters would trigger a change in the overall project strategy. No critical risks have yet been identified. In the period up to the Mid-term Evaluation, the UNDP-CO has also monitored the Project through only single annual field visits – mainly because of the remoteness of the PIU office and field sites and the associated high time and monetary costs – although it maintains close contact with the NPM by phone and skype. However, during the MTE de-briefing meeting, the level of visits was acknowledged to be too infrequent. Given the problems identified within the PIU (see paragraph 76 *et seq*.) the MTE recommends that the UNDP-CO visits the PIU at least three times a year until smoother relations are established between the NPM and PIU staff.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The MTE recommends** that the UNDP-CO makes visits to the PIU in Ust-Kamenogorsk at least every four months during 2010 and at least half-yearly thereafter in order to facilitate efficient functioning of the PIU and resolve any conflicts. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| UNDP | Schedule and carry out regular visits to the PIU. | Suggest visits in February, June and Oct 2010 and March and September 2011. | Monitoring visits. |

Internal activity monitoring is extremely poor. The forthcoming Annual Work Plan (AWP) is developed and submitted to the PSC for approval in their winter meeting (usually November or December but in 2007/8 it was in February 2008) along with approval by the NPD and the Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP-CO. This AWP defines the terms for each activity and its milestones and is divided into quarters. But that appears to be the sole tool used for monitoring activities – no quarterly or monthly plans are produced; if there are delays in implementation the delayed activities are simply moved into the next quarter along with the budget. This lacks any formal coordination and means that activities dependent upon a chain of events or the achievement of prior tasks cannot be planned properly. The NPM indicates that meetings are held quarterly for PIU Experts to report progress and to seek help where problems cannot be solved on there own and since there is little non-consultant-based work undertaken that this is adequate. The PIU Experts appear to dispute both these issues. Certainly no monthly project planning meetings are held nor any weekly coordination meetings – a major source of grievance amongst the staff. Information exchange appears to be limited to the quarterly meetings although *ad-hoc* exchange is “*not prohibited within the office*” (an odd turn of phrase the MTE notes – rather than say “*is encouraged*”). No back-to-office reports are filed by staff returning from field trips or stakeholder meetings.[[15]](#footnote-15) Apparently all external visits are supposed to be discussed in 5-10 minute meetings, but again according to PIU staff these do not occur. There is a public folder on the computer of the Finance and Administrative Assistant in which all information is located, but yet again the staff dispute that it holds any meaningful information and that they have to ask the NPM for all information. He says it is readily forthcoming – they say it is not. Clearly this is a major problem – see paragraph 68 for discussion and recommendations. The NPM works closely individually with Experts and checks all TORs for consultancy tenders. All external consultants and contractors have been tied to results-based contracts with payments dependent upon satisfactory deliverables or milestones. No time-based contracts have been let. The NPM also exerts daily control through his involvement with meetings, seminars, discussions, and contracts. Since the Project has been implemented under the NEX modality and all procurements and operational issues were arranged by the UNDP-CO, no independent annual financial audit has been necessary. Nevertheless, one is planned for 2010.

Impact monitoring by the Project is effectively absent. The indicators in the logframe are measured every year or two as appropriate but that is all. Apparently this is what is written in the Project Document so that is all that is done. During training courses, some account is taken on who is active and asks questions and then tries to focus training on those who are less active. No measurements are made on a before/after basis to identify the impact of the courses or even longer term on the retention of course material. While the premise that “*if only one local person starts doing something differently after training then it was successful*” is laudable in principle, it does not allow training methods to be assessed and altered to become more cost-effective. Similarly, the ideas that “*the management plans were approved so the training was OK*” and that “*I talk to people who I don’t know and they talk about the project so awareness must be growing*” are rudimentary and do not equate to a properly developed and implemented monitoring programme designed to improve methods of delivery to target audiences and maximise retention of messages. This has to be changed[[16]](#footnote-16).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The MTE recommends** that the UNDP-CO provides the PIU with training and assistance as necessary to develop an impact monitoring programme to provide increased feedback and improved decision-making capability over its activities. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| UNDP -CO | Provide NPM and PIU staff with training, information, examples, and materials as necessary to improve its impact monitoring programme. | Immediately. | Functioning impact monitoring. |
| UNDP-CO | Provide opportunity for NPM and PIU staff to visit other GEF projects within country to learn lessons regarding impact monitoring | First Quarter 2010 | Practical examples of impact monitoring demonstrated. |
| UNDP-CO/UNDP-GEF Bratislava | Consider providing expertise from a successful GEF project[[17]](#footnote-17) within the region to deliver informal training and examples of impact monitoring from their experience. | First Quarter 2010 | Practical examples of impact monitoring demonstrated. |

# Project Results

## Development Objective Indicators

One of the two indicators relating to the Project’s Development Objective is rather weak and is largely outside of the Project’s control to show meaningful progress. Nonetheless, at the time of the MTE, both indicators remained on track.

* Populations of endangered species have not decreased below baseline levels by year 5 and show an increase (over longer term than project)
* No change in the number of snow leopard *Panthera uncia.*
* No change in the number of Altai argali *Ovis ammon ammon*.
* Number of imperial eagle *Aquila heliaca* increased from 10 to 40.
* Number of black stork *Ciconia nigra* increased from 25 to 60.

The species selected as indicators for this project are essentially meaningless in terms of indicating the Project’s impacts. Both mammals are extremely rare and elusive and inhabit extremely rugged mountainous terrain, and neither the manpower nor the methods are available to obtain accurate population estimates of them. Training in new survey methods means that these methods rather than any real population increases may eventually be at the heart of any reported increases. The two bird species are trans-continental migrants – therefore any number of factors during their journeys or on their wintering grounds may be at the root of any changes perceived rather than project activities.

* No reduction in the total PAs area covered by forest from 2006 baseline
* No change.

No fires have been registered and no clear-fell harvesting carried out in the Project area which the PIU believes to be the result of its activities, including a fire prevention campaign and the introduction of limited forest exploitation in buffer zones. As a result, monitoring shows there to be no reduction in the forested area from 2006 baseline levels.

## Summary Evaluation

Overall, the Project entitled *Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Kazakhstani Sector of the Altai-Sayan Mountain Ecoregion* is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance, and hence the MTE evaluates it as **Marginally Satisfactory**. In making this evaluation, it is important to understand that some success has been achieved in spite of the difficulties with which the Project works. The climatic conditions are extremely difficult with very cold winters (-30oC is not uncommon), and with many of the villages in the Project area cut-off for several months of the winter by snow. The area is very remote, the stakeholders have low baseline capacity, the local people appear fairly passive with little motivation to be involved with biodiversity conservation, and the agencies with which the people work are under-funded with basic equipment that is often old and of poor quality. It is, therefore, important that the MTE has realistic expectations of what a project such as this can achieve in the time that it has been working, and while the design was rightly not overly complex or ambitious, the MTE has been surprised by the level of progress made by the Project in moving towards establishing the new protected areas and a new trans-boundary reserve. A key issue now remains to see if the Government’s procedures will allow gazettement of these areas before the Project’s end. The Project has also taken good steps to develop a framework for facilitating dissemination of experiences; the same mechanisms also allowing it to take on board lessons learned from other projects.

However, progress in the other areas of the Project is limited. Very little or no progress seems to have made in relation to certain key goals, notably development of the Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council[[18]](#footnote-18), the Local Community Conservation Councils, and the national training facility for PA managers and staff; and the livelihood development activities are suffering from slow implementation, too little innovation, and in places lack of relevance. Communication both within the PIU and on the ground is poor, in particular the Project is too remote from its target area. The PIU is riven with tensions and inter-personal problems, and a number of basic management functions relating to planning, information exchange, and M&E are limiting its effectiveness and efficiency. As a result, the above overall evaluation stands.

Key Project achievements include:

* significant progress made towards establishing new protected areas and the boundaries of existing ones are being adjusted to improve their long-term conservation effectiveness;
* a draft agreement on establishing a trans-boundary protected area with the Russian Federation is awaiting an imminent joint-signing;
* the designation “*ecological corridors*” included in the *Law of Protected Areas 2006* is being implemented for the first time and draft legislation to this end is under consideration by the Government;
* legislative reforms are being introduced in concert with other GEF projects through a set of coordinated amendments that has been endorsed by the Government and is now obligatory for implementation;
* the operational capacity of the target PAs – Katon-Karagai National Park and Markakol Zapovednik – has been increased significantly through the provision of staff-training and equipment;
* co-financing has been obtained from the East Kazakhstan Oblast Akimat for a micro-credit facility;
* awareness of, and support for, biodiversity conservation and PAs is being increased among all stakeholders, albeit slowly because of difficult conditions; and
* a Council of Project Managers has been established to facilitate coordination amongst projects and dissemination of information.

The main problem areas identified by the MTET are:

* questionable relevance regarding key new habitats protected and much of the proposed economic development;
* too little innovation over many of the aspects of the livelihood development proposals;
* poor communication internally and externally – the PIU is too remote from its target geographic area and needs a person(s) on the ground;
* a poorly functioning project implementation unit; and
* too little progress on certain key aspects of the Project – Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council[[19]](#footnote-19), the Local Community Conservation Councils, and the national training facility for PA managers and staff.

A summary evaluation by Project Output is given in Table 4 and a more detailed summary of the level of achievements made against the indicators of success contained in the logframe is given in [Annex IV](#_Annex_IV_:). Results are discussed below by Project Outcome (please see footnote 12) and key sectoral or cross-cutting issues are then discussed in the ensuing section.

**Table 4: Evaluation of the end of project situation as per the logframe**

| Component | | Evaluation\* | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| HS | S | MS | MU | U | HU |
| Output 1.1 | [New protected areas are established](#_Output_1.1:_Integrated_Land Use Spa) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1.2 | [Organizational structures, staffing standards and performance accountability are improved](#_Output_1.2:_Organizational_structur) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1.3 | [Operational capacity of PAs is enhanced](#_Output_1.3:_Operational_capacity of) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1.4 | [Biodiversity information in PAs is improved](#_Output_1.4:_Biodiversity_informatio) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 2.1 | [Project communications strategy is developed and implemented](#_Output_2.1:_Project_communications ) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 2.2 | [Biodiversity awareness raising programme is developed and implemented](#_Output_2.2:_Forest_managed for nati) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 2.3 | [Visitor/community information centres are established](#_Output_2.3:_Visitor/community_infor) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 3.1 | [Essential enabling legislative and regulatory reforms are facilitated](#_Output_3.1:_Essential_enabling legi) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 3.2 | [Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council is established](#_Output_3.2:_Oblast_Akimat PA Adviso) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 3.3 | [Trans-boundary collaboration agreements and conservation programs are formulated and implemented](#_Output_3.3:_Trans-boundary_collabor) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 4.1 | [Sustainable alternative livelihood options are facilitated through demonstration projects](#_Output_4.1:_Sustainable_alternative) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 4.2 | [Ecology and guide/ranger training camps for children and youth respectively are organized and operated](#_Output_4.2:_Ecology_and guide/range) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 4.3 | [Local NGOs supported](#_Output_4.3:_Local_NGOs are supporte) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 4.4 | [Local Community Conservation Councils are established](#_Output_4.4:_Local_Community Conserv) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 5.1 | [M&E and adaptive management applied to project](#_Output_5.1:_M&E_and adaptive manage) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 5.2 | [Lessons learned and best practices are replicated at the national level using a national PA management training facility](#_Output_5.2:_Lessons_learned and bes) |  |  |  |  |  |  |

\* Note: HS = Highly satisfactory; S = Satisfactory; MS = Marginally satisfactory; MU= Marginally unsatisfactory; U = Unsatisfactory; HU = Highly unsatisfactory.

## Project Outputs

Since the MTE lacked a national consultant, and time was at a premium, the MTE asked the PIU staff to provide written summaries of the work carried out to date by the Project. The MTE gratefully acknowledges this contribution and the material produced in this section represents an edited version of those summaries.

### Outcome 1: Protected area network is expanded and PA management effectiveness is enhanced

#### Output 1.1: New protected areas are established

New protected areas are being established and the boundaries of existing ones are being adjusted to improve their long-term conservation effectiveness. These fall into two main categories:

1. The total area under protection within the project boundaries has been increased to 746,448 ha by the expansion of Markakol Zapovednik (IUCN Category I) by 27,931 ha under the Kazakhstan Government’s Resolution # 1214 “*On provision of the land to Markakol State Reserve for permanent use*” dated 11th December 2007. Demarcation of these new officially approved boundaries has been completed on the ground by the State Enterprise “*Vostok NPTSZem*”, at a cost of KZT 17 million (US$ 113,334) funded from the state budget.
2. The Project completed the primary activities for the establishment of four new protected areas, including the scientific justification studies, and the land surveys and allotment. Environmental, and social and economic assessments were carried out, including studies of ecosystems and nature objects, risks and biodiversity threats, and measures for their mitigation. The recommendations on protection category, boundaries, areas, and protection and use regime were elaborated. The four areas, which will be included in a single PA game reserve with cluster sites totalling 158,039 ha, are:

* Kalzhir – a buffer zone of Markakol Zapovednik with a planned area of 21,200 ha;
* Bas-Terekty – a National Nature Monument with a planned area of 17,246 ha;
* Kabinski – an ecological corridor with a regulated protection regime and a planned area of 65,760 ha, although the MTE remains unsure of the corridor function served since it is not contiguous with any new or existing PA (see map in [Annex IX](#_Annex_IX_:_Map of Protected Areas P)); and
* Kyzyltas – a State nature complex game reserve (Zakaznik) with a planned area of 53,833 ha.

1. The Project is carrying out the definition of the full buffer zone of the Markakol Zapovednik (79,390 ha including the new area of 21,200 ha at Kalzhir). This includes preparing a map of the buffer zone and developing a draft set of Regulations.

The idea of “*ecological corridors*” was introduced under the *Law on Protected Areas 2006* and this will be the first time that the designation will be established under that Law. The Ministry of Agriculture has produced the concept for a draft law and an Inter-departmental Commission reviewed this during the drafting of this MTE report (26th October 2009). This draft law will provide the mechanisms necessary for the designation of this new category, and the plans of the Government of Kazakhstan are for the draft law to be submitted to the Lower Chamber in September 2010. The activities necessary for the legal establishment of the four new sites as one PA[[20]](#footnote-20) will be included in the National Programme on PA Network Development for 2011-2013. The MTE notes and praises the significant progress made with this Output, and while the Government appears to be totally committed to the designation of these new areas, the MTE notes that because of the timing of Government procedures, there still remains a real risk that these reserves will not be established within the lifetime of the Project – see paragraph 74.

The Project Document included a plan for the Project to include 5,000 ha at Berkutaul into the Katon-Karagai National Park. This actually took place before the Project Document was signed. As a result, the Project has focused instead on defining the functional zones of the KKNP and has provided expert support to complete the study “*Correction of Feasibility Study of Katon-Karagai National Park in terms of development of general infrastructure plan*” which includes four functional zones, namely a) reserved regime zone; b) environmental stabilization zone; c) recreational zone; and d) zone of limited economic activities. The process to approve this zoning was approved at the FHC Scientific Council meeting of 19th November 2009.

#### Output 1.2: Organizational structures, staffing standards and performance accountability are improved

An analysis of management efficiency was conducted for KKNP and Markakol Zapovednik and recommendations for improvements were prepared. A review of the legislation and a capacity assessment at the institutional and individual levels is underway and will be completed in December 2009 to determine the effectiveness of protection afforded by KKNP and to identify barriers and constraints for efficient protection operations of the Park. Recommendations and a detailed Action Plan on protection efficiency improvement for KKNP are in the process of being developed including new protection methods, and an improved scheme for the effective planning of human and technical resources. The project is currently selecting a contractor to undertake a similar study of Markakol Zapovednik. The management efficiency tracking tool (METT) has been completed annually.

A financial analysis at the systemic, institutional, and individual levels was conducted to determine its efficiency and sustainability, and a methodological guide book on financial and economic activities of PAs was developed and published. An Action Plan on non-budget income generation and management is being prepared (due February 2010) which includes an analysis of the current practices for attracting non-budget finance; development and implementation of additional paid services by KKNP and Markakol Zapovednik; an analysis of the legislation and PA capacity for increasing non-budget finances; and a plan for attracting and managing additional non-budget funds to achieving sustainable financing.

Following preparation of a training needs plan, a number of training courses for staff have been completed to increase their capacity. These include:

* development of PA management plans held on 18-19th February 2008 in Ust-Kamenogorsk for 12 people from KKNP, five from Markakol Zapovednik, four from Semei Ormany Nature Reserve, two from Zapadno-Altaiski Reserve and two from the East Kazakhstan Forestry and Hunting Inspectorate. Under the framework of the Memorandum on cooperation between FHC projects, trainers were invited from partner projects, namely the Expert on Biodiversity of the UNDP-GEF Wetlands Project and the Expert on PAs of UNDP-GEF Agrobiodiversity Project. Issues covered included management planning of a national park and Zapovednik; how management planning is defined under the Law on Protected Areas; processes of participatory planning; formation of work groups; scheduling works and assigning responsible people; using METT as a PA efficiency assessment tool; and SWOT analysis;
* training in Aksu-Zhabagly Zapovednik in Zhabagly village on 15-25th April, 2007 on development of management plans for different types of PAs in Kazakhstan;
* training in KKNP on 12-15th June 2008 for 17 people from KKNP and 3 people from Markakol Zapovednik on methods of monitoring populations of argali and snow leopard;
* training of five KKNP inspectors on monitoring snow leopards including methods, planning fieldwork, installation of photo-traps and interpretation of the resulting data held jointly with the UNDP-GEF project “*Conservation of biodiversity in Russian part of Altai-Sayan Ecoregion*” on 1-10th November 2008 in the Sayano-Shushinski Reserve, Russia; and
* training for six people from KKNP and Markakol on GIS courses held in Astana – ArcGIS I and basics of ArcGIS II (both for ArcView 9, ArcEditor 9, and Arclnfo 9).

It remains unclear how effective this training has been and whether it covers all the deficiencies identified in staffing standards. Furthermore, there is no evidence of any changes to performance accountability as indicated in the Project Document, e.g. the introduction of (or improvements to) annual staff appraisals or performance reviews, formalised job descriptions and hiring pre-requisites, or the introduction of bonuses or other initiatives to motivate better target achievement.

#### Output 1.3: Operational capacity of PAs is enhanced

The Project has provided expert support to KKNP and Markakol Zapovednik in developing their management plans through:

* training workshops on the development of management plans (see above);
* thematic groups and timeframes to develop the various sections;
* an analysis of land use adjacent to KKNP and preparation of maps;
* support with the preparation of maps including soil, landscape, ecosystems, fauna, recreational resources, and administration;
* support in elaborating the plans based on recommendations of the FHC and environmental expertise; and
* an identification of the current financial needs for the implementation of the management plans of KKNP, Markakol and Zapadno-Altaiski Zapovedniki.

The management plans of the two PAs received the approval of the FHC by Orders # 281 and 284 on 7th October 2009.

The Project also purchased equipment in order to improve the technical capacity of the protected areas’ scientific divisions, animals and forest protection divisions, and tourism and eco-education divisions, including:

* satellite internet facilities;
* computers and printers;
* equipment for observation and environmental monitoring e.g. binoculars, telescopes;
* photo and video equipment;
* video surveillance system, camera traps; and
* field equipment (tents, sleeping bags, winter clothing, saddles).

#### Output 1.4: Biodiversity information in PAs is improved

The Project conducted an inventory of key bird species and those to be used for monitoring within the Project area. It undertook an aerial survey of the ungulate animals in KKNP used as prey by snow leopard. It is undertaking activities to define and map the potential habitats of snow leopard to determine the locations for installing camera-traps. It is also preparing maps and electronic databases of biodiversity in GIS for PAs. These are all good activities to establish the baseline conditions, and the MTE hopes that the Project now moves forward with the “*development and implementation of an ecosystem-based monitoring programme in the PAs … designed in a manner that will yield key information to managers and other decision-makers*” as envisaged in the Project Document.

### Outcome 2: Awareness of and support for biodiversity conservation and PAs is increased among all stakeholders

#### Output 2.1: Project communications strategy is developed and implemented

A Communication Strategy has been developed by the Project which provides a framework for its awareness-raising activities. The Strategy appears to be of fairly high quality although the MTE believes it could have been more aim-oriented rather than method-centric. Nonetheless, re-drafting it would serve no useful purpose. Within this framework, a number of activities have taken place. A Project web site has been developed and is operational – see [www.altai-sayan.kz](http://www.altai-sayan.kz). This also appears fairly comprehensive, but there is no English-language version, a matter that needs to be rectified given the international dimension to GEF projects. The results of the Project activities have been published in the national, regional and local mass-media, as well as distributed electronically to interested parties. About 50 newspaper articles, four TV plots, and two video films about the Project’s activities have been produced.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The MTE recommends** that the Project produces an English-language version (or at least some pages) on its website to raise awareness within the international community[[21]](#footnote-21). | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| PIU | Produce at least some information about the Project, its aims and achievements in English on its website. | By end of 1st Quarter 2010. | English web pages |

Partnerships with the key target groups and organizations have been established including Governmental Authorities at all levels, environmental agencies, NGOs, tourism agencies, regional department of roads, and educational bodies – 32 schools, three higher education institutions, two colleges, six NGOs, an Ecobiocentre, and 30 libraries and youth organizations in the rural areas. Meetings about the results of the survey on biodiversity awareness in the Project sites have been held with the PAs of the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion, local and regional governmental authorities, and the Internal Policy and Education Division of East Kazakhstan Oblast. An information campaign about the Project’s goals and tasks has been carried out including a press conference at the inception stage; 1,000 copies of informational flyers on the Project goals have been published in both Kazakh and Russian languages; an audio presentation about the Project was developed and 150 copies distributed; and Project branding products with UNDP, GEF, FHC logos have been produced and distributed including badges, pens, files, notebooks, and paper bags (1,000 each).

#### Output 2.2: Biodiversity awareness raising programme is developed and implemented

Two key information campaigns have been implemented on:

* the conservation of rare and threatened species of flora and fauna in the Kazakhstan part of the Altai-Sayan Eco-region which included:
  + workshops for school teachers and children on conservation of rare and threatened species of flora of the region were conducted for a total of 150 participants;.
  + books, booklets, and flyers (totally 5,000 copies) about rare and threatened species of flora and fauna were published and distributed to regional and rural libraries, museums, schools, and higher education institutions;
  + 4,000 copies of books in Kazakh and Russian languages about KKNP and Markakol Reserve were published and distributed;
  + calendars (desk and wall) and badges with rare and threatened species of the region were published and produced (500 copies each of five types);
  + an extra-curricula environmental education programme about the unique ecosystems, rare and endemic species of the region has been developed for the children of grades 5-9.
  + a video film about rare and threatened plants and about the work of the school forestry “*Oraltai*” of Katon-Karagai district was developed and distributed – 26 copies; and
  + the Project supported the participation of “*Oraltai*” school forestry in the 5th International Forest Competition in Moscow where they won 4th prize among 28 countries for organizing a demonstration site of rare and threatened species of the Kazakhstan part of the Altai-Sayan Eco-region.
* fire prevention which included :
  + an extra-curricula programme on fire prevention and safety issues in the forest for the children of grades 1-4;
  + a survey on the key causes of fire and the awareness level on fire prevention issues was conducted among 400 local people;
  + information materials were produced and workshops held on fire prevention issues in eight villages with a total of 153 participants;
  + for workshops in the project villages was prepared;
  + flyers about fire prevention for visitors (800 copies), for local population (500), and for drivers (300) were produced; and
  + visual material was produced and installed – 10 billboards on fire prevention, five stands, and five signs for waste utilisation places.

Support has also been provided to the PAs for organizing awareness and educational campaigns themselves. This has included:

* support for the school forestries system and school eco-tourism clubs that focus their activities in biodiversity conservation in the region;
* coordination, consulting, financial, and technical support for participation in the March of Parks’ activities (24,000 people), for which 300 posters are produced, prizes purchased, and businesses attracted to participate, and in the eco-tourism festival “*Zhasyl Alan*” (150 participants from 14 children and youth groups) for which a video film was broadcast four times in 2008 and four times in 2009 in Russian and Kazakh languages on the 1st TV channel and Kalken Channel;
* a conference for 30 participants on “*Development of system of children and youth environmental groups for the support of PAs’ activities*”;
* a master class on organization of school forestries for 30 participants from the staffs of Ile-Alatau National Park and Almaty Reserve for sharing the successful experience;
* support for the participation of five representatives from the PAs’ in international events related to the foundation of the trans-boundary PA “*Altai*” and to snow leopard monitoring;
* a roundtable discussion for 31 people on “*Identification of mutually acceptable forms of effective cooperation of the organizations, involved in biodiversity conservation in KASE*”;
* a roundtable discussion for 29 people on “*Cooperation in the area of biodiversity conservation and PAs sustainable development*”;

The Project has also regularly supported environmental actions and events including “*Birds Day*”, “*Earth Day*”, “*Tulip Festival*”, “*Eco-Idea 2009*”, and participated in the conference on establishing the youth organization “*Altai*” in the Project site.

However, despite all the considerable work undertaken under Outputs 2.1 and 2.2, its impact falls short of that which could be expected or desired. As indicators #7 and #8 show (see [Annex IV](#_Annex_IV_:)), the progress towards achieving the target levels of awareness fall far short of half-way and given that most people respond to messages early in a campaign it would seem that the Project will have its work cut-out to increase responses while avoiding message fatigue. It may be that certain types of awareness-raising are being more or less effective than others or that the reach of certain methods is not what was hoped, but then the lack of impact monitoring (paragraph 30) means that the Project has no feedback with which to refine its approaches, reproducing the successful ones and curtailing the less successful. Only the fire-prevention campaign appears to be achieving the desired results.

#### Output 2.3: Visitor/community information centres are established

A feasibility study for reconstructing the KKNP Visitor Centre has been prepared and will form the basis for including the reconstruction works into the State budget.

### Outcome 3: The enabling environment for strengthening the national protected area system is enhanced

#### Output 3.1: Essential enabling legislative and regulatory reforms are facilitated

A number of GEF projects are currently being implemented in Kazakhstan, each of which aims to amend the relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks. In order to coordinate these legislative improvements, a task group of all the GEF NPMs was formed and a “*Concept on the introduction of amendments and changes in legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan related to biodiversity conservation*” was developed. This Concept was endorsed by the Government of Kazakhstan and is obligatory for implementation. The Concept was approved at an Intersectoral Committee meeting held on 28th October 2009 and discussed at a roundtable meeting on 30th October with the participation of all the GEF projects in Kazakhstan. Within this framework, the Project has elaborated amendments to the Forest Code. In addition, the Project has developed payment rates for use of forest and PA resources within protected areas of the East Kazakhstan region.

#### Output 3.2: Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council is established

This Output was changed in the Inception Report to become “*Legal mechanisms for improved collaboration between all stakeholders at the local level on SPA related issues are established*”. Because of serious confusion arising between the MTE and the NPM over the status of the Inception Report, it has proved impossible for the MTE to evaluate the work undertaken towards this Output[[22]](#footnote-22).

#### Output 3.3: Trans-boundary collaboration agreements and conservation programmes are formulated and implemented

A Draft Agreement on establishing a transboundary protected area “*Altai*” and its governing Board that will include Katunski Biosphere Reserve in Russia and Katon-Karagai National Park in Kazakhstan, was discussed at an international conference organized by the Project and held on 25-26th June 2008 in Ust-Kamenogorsk. The participants of the conference included representatives of the FHC; the Akimat of East Kazakhstan Oblast; the administration of KKNP; the Department of Environmental Policy of the Ministry of Nature Resources, Russia; Ministry of Nature Resources of the Altai Republic, Russia; the administration of Katunski State Nature Biosphere Reserve; and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The Draft Agreement and accompanying Regulations (see [Annex VII](#_Annex_VII_:_Draft Regulations of th)) were approved by the Government of Kazakhstan on 2nd June 2009 and were sent to the Russian party by letter #15-1/1499. The Russian Government has also agreed them and a joint-signing by the two Governments is planned. The MTE recognizes the significant progress that has been achieved here, but nevertheless the establishment of the Board and its governing regulations is only a first step. Implementation of a joint conservation programme is the aim of this Output, and much work needs to be undertaken urgently if such a programme is to be formulated, let alone implemented.

### Outcome 4: Community involvement in biodiversity conservation is increased and opportunities for sustainable alternative livelihoods within PAs and buffer zones are facilitated

#### Output 4.1: Sustainable alternative livelihood options are facilitated through demonstration projects

A baseline analysis has been carried out in 47 villages of the two project sites to identify key social and economic indicators, threats to biodiversity as perceived by the local communities, measures for mitigation of these threats, and the means by which the local communities could participate in resource management. In addition, a community mobilisation exercise was conducted by a team of national and international consultants between 20th July-3rd August 2008 with about 300 people through five big meetings, seven small group meetings, and many meetings with individuals. These two exercises provided the basis for development of the alternative livelihoods concept, the small grants programme, and for targeting capacity building in the area to build a participatory mechanism for the management of natural resources. As a result, an Initiative Group was formed by the villagers proposing members who they respect, trust, and who are capable of expressing the interests of local communities. This group has agreed an action plan that will address the key threats to biodiversity identified – over-consumption of firewood, land degradation, and fires. A secondary group of threats deals with the inefficient use of natural resources through wasted income from the potential use of agricultural and forest products (wool, skins, wood, berries, mushrooms, herbs) and uncontrolled tourism. To address these threats, practices applicable to the climate and infrastructure conditions have been initiated:

* Over-consumption of firewood: i) fuel plantations, ii) improving heating devices, iii) pressed animal dung;
* Land degradation: i) improving pastures and hayfields by sowing permanent grasses, ii) organization of pasture rotation schemes, iii) seasonal use of distant pastures;
* Inefficient use of products: i) processing forest by-products, ii) processing of agriculture by-products, iii) medicinal herb plantations, iv) beekeeping;
* Uncontrolled tourism: i) guest houses for tourists, ii) tourism services.

A small grants programme (SGP) and micro-credit facility are under development by the Project:

* Small grants programme: two rounds of outreach trips to all rural districts have been undertaken with local authorities and villagers (20 meetings with total participants numbering 200 people) to explain the possibilities for participation in the SGP. In the first round, thematic priorities and application procedures were discussed, while the second concentrated on specific ideas and projects[[23]](#footnote-23). Six pilot projects demonstrating practices outlined in the previous paragraph have been initiated, thus (see [Annex VIII](#_Annex_VII_:_Projects initiated and ) for more details):

1. mitigation of land degradation processes by organizing sustainable pasture management in Katon-Karagai village. Based on the results of this demonstration, two more villages experiencing land degradation problems wish to replicate the experience of Katon project;
2. mitigation of wild forest degradation caused by over-consumption of firewood and poor forest rehabilitation practices by developing a plantation of fast-growing species (poplar and willow);
3. demonstration of energy-efficient Buleryan stove to decrease firewood consumption in seven villages where people face the firewood shortages.;
4. processing wool (currently a by-product) and production of traditional domestic and decorative goods and to market and promote a brand of environment-friendly products from the eco-region;
5. development of a wood-processing workshop for producing domestic goods for the local market and souvenirs for promoting the image of the Altai region among tourists; and
6. processing non-timber forest products and marketing and branding these at the local and regional level.

Only the first of these pilot projects appears yet to be active with all of the others still waiting on decisions of awarding the grants. Again, the MTE believes that the process of the development and implementation of this SGP has been slow leaving only two years for the pilot projects to demonstrate a positive outcome with regards to the problems they are addressing, obtain technical help from the Project with development and marketing of products, and/or show enough progress for other people/villages to want to replicate them. The MTE believes that the relevance of at least two of them is suspect – see paragraph 66.

* Micro-credit facility: An assessment of the main economic activities in the project areas was conducted, covering agriculture, land use, fishing, hunting, forestry, and business development. The micro-credit programme has been developed for the local communities of the project area during 2008-2009. This has included an elaboration of the priority alternative livelihoods to be funded, principles of mobilisation for potential loan holders, terms and procedures, and monitoring and evaluation of the funded projects. The Project investigated a number of micro-credit providers and signed an agreement with the “*JSC Fund of Financial Support for Agriculture*” to act on its behalf – the only one which would accept any building (including wooden ones) as collateral and also had the lowest interest rates for loans to individuals (currently 9.5% pa). The Project participates in the selection of the applications and forms the projects’ portfolio, as well as providing information, and consultative and methodological support to rural communities. The Project also approached the East Kazakhstan Oblast Akimat who agreed to provide KZT 10 million (US$ 66,667) to the fund for 2009, with similar amounts to be considered for each year hence. Outreach seminars were conducted in six rural districts during 29th May to 4th June 2009 for a total of 166 people covering business start-up, business planning, financial planning, micro-credit opportunities, and loan application documents and procedures. The first disbursement of loans is planned for the beginning of November 2009 and projects under consideration include
* wool processing and production of domestic goods;
* production and marketing of kumys (fermented horse milk);
* establishment of a tree nursery for conifers and bushes;
* establishment of a bakery;
* establishment of a cafe for tourists and a greenhouse to grow ingredients; and
* stock breeding improvements (two projects).

#### Output 4.2: Ecology and guide/ranger training camps for children and youth respectively are organized and operated

In 2007, a study on the recreational capacity of the Project sites was completed which identified the main recreational objects, estimated the current use of recreational resources, and provided recommendations for improving the PA-based tourism activities and the possibilities to involve local communities in recreational activities of KKNP. In summer 2009, a complex field study was carried out by local consultants to assess the current recreational infrastructure, develop and mark the main routes, and provide recommendations on the necessary infrastructure improvements. This will form the basis for the development of the General Infrastructure Plan of KKNP.

Progress on this Output appears slow and confused. This is one of the outputs that was changed in the Inception Report to become “*Programme for SPA-based sustainable tourism will be developed and implemented*” and then abandoned. The activities reported above are patchy and seem un-related to children/youth camps and if aimed at tourism, appear slow – surely the Project should be ahead of developing an infrastructure plan at this stage. Assuming the Output has been changed to that in the Inception Report, the MTE would expect a programme to have been developed by now, so that implementation can be tested and perfected in the second half of the Project’s duration.

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| **The MTE recommends** that the objectives of Output 4.2 are clarified and that implementation is fast-tracked to ensure completion of deliverables. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| UNDP/PIU | Clarify the objectives of Output 4.2 to be either as per the Project Document or as per the Inception Report. | Immediately | An agreed output |
| PIU | Speed up delivery of the output so that either the eco/ranger camps or the tourism programme is tested in 2010 and perfected in 2011. | Summer 2010 | Product tested |
| Summer 2011 | Product delivered and demonstrated |

#### Output 4.3: Local NGOs are supported

Within the Project’s community mobilisation activities the first community-based NGO “*Mametek*” was legally registered in the region in April 2009 having been formed originally as an Initiative Group to implement the pilot project on pasture management (see paragraph 56). It comprises 12 people, all living in Katon-Karagai village, and the Project has provided it with basic office equipment and technical expertise as well as organizational, project and financial management, and resource mobilisation. The NGO plans to expand its activities to include sustainable development of rural areas, informational support of good practices, building partnership among stakeholders in the region, support training activities in the area of social, economic and environmental development, although, just like any other NGO in Kazakhstan, they are not willing to organize and implement a project, without outside financial support.

#### Output 4.4: Local Community Conservation Councils are established

It appears that very little has been carried out in progressing this Output. A shortage of information on PA activities has been identified as a key barrier for understanding and cooperation between the local population, protected area authorities, and local authorities. Thus, the Project produced, published, and distributed books about KKNP and Markakol Zapovednik – a publication on the concept of resource co-management for the protected areas staff (1,000 copies), and a brochure on PA co-management possibilities for local communities (3,000). In addition, a brochure on the recommended PA expansion at Markakol was published to give an opportunity to local people to participate in the process of the establishment of new PAs, although in the view of the MTE this seems overly optimistic and simplistic – it will need a lot more than a brochure to give people an opportunity to participate in the establishment process. The Initiative Group/NGO “*Mametek*” (see paragraphs 56 and 60) is taken by the Project as a first stage towards the establishment of a Local Community Conservation Council (LCCC), but the MTE could see no strategy in place to get from one to the other. Given that in the Inception Report the justification for the changes to Output 4.3 reads that:

“*The experience in Kazakhstan has proved that establishment of NGOs by donors is the worst practice. The project should build capacity based on existing active groups through consultations, trainings, technical support, but not through establishing an institution that is doomed to die after the Project’s end*”

the same logic would appear to apply to LCCCs. This suggests that for the process to be effective it would require as much time as possible and therefore require an early start by the Project – something which has clearly not occurred[[24]](#footnote-24).

### Outcome 5: Monitoring and evaluation of project, networking and collaboration among protected areas is improved, and the best practices and lessons learned are disseminated and replicated in other locations within the national protected area system

#### Output 5.1: M&E and adaptive management applied to project

As indicated in paragraph 29 *et seq*., the Project M&E is unsatisfactory. However, the adaptive management has been fairly good (see paragraph 82) and hence the ranking of this Output in Table 4 has been ameliorated.

#### Output 5.2: Lessons learned and best practices are replicated at the national level using a national PA management training facility

Little has been done in the way of replicating best practices and lessons learned to date, but that is not altogether unusual for a project at its mid-point since many of its activities have not yet produced results or lessons that can be passed on to others.

The UNDP-CO also has a conceptual framework for all GEF projects to facilitate dissemination of lessons and experience by designating three PAs not in the Project with which the Project will share. In the case of this Project, those PAs are West Altai Zapovednik, Turgusunsky Zakaznik, and Semei Ormaty Zakaznik. The Project has also established a framework to facilitate future dissemination by initiating the Council of Project Managers. This Council, formed on 14th August 2007, meets quarterly and comprises the NPMs of the current Project, plus those of the UNDP-GEF projects *Conservation of Mountain Agro-biodiversity of Kazakhstan*; *Conservation of Globally Significant Wetlands as Habitats of Migrating Water Birds in Three Areas*; and *Conservation and Sustainable Management of Steppe Ecosystems*; and the WB-GEF project on forestation. It is chaired by the Deputy Head of the FHC. It provides a forum to enhance the sustainability of the national PA network through joint planning and implementation of training activities; sharing experience and methodologies between expert staffs, e.g. on the development and funding of alternative livelihoods for inhabitants neighbouring PAs; use of common databases on consultants and organizations available to assist project implementation; the sharing of technical information through outlets such as the “*Pearls of Kazakhstan*” journal, and web resources (e.g. [www.fhc.kz](http://www.fhc.kz)); and enables unified approaches to formatting and software used for mapping and databases and a coordinated approach to marketing surveys and environmental campaigns. Despite these significant and laudable steps, the fact remains that under this Output the design foresaw “*the establishment of a national training facility for PA managers and staff will be supported*” and there remains no sign of any progress to this end.[[25]](#footnote-25)

# Key Issues

As can be seen from the foregoing part of the evaluation, the MTE believes that this is generally a good project concept, fairly well implemented technically if less so managerially, in quite challenging circumstances. The aim of this section is to concentrate on those key and often difficult cross-cutting issues that the Project, at its halfway stage, now needs to address. It is important that the reader keeps in mind that this section is not intended to show this Project in a poor light, rather to improve it. running into some problems because of slow implementation and various management issues.

## The Strategic Context

### Relevance – Management by Indicator

The review of achievements outlined in the preceding section – Project Outputs – suggests that most of the Project is being implemented well and that the Project is on-track to achieve its aims. While all looks well on paper, both above and in the PIRs and other means of reporting, things are very much less encouraging on the ground. Key amongst the MTE’s concerns is that regarding the relevance of many of the activities taking place – in short many of these appear to be at best only marginally relevant or at worst wholly irrelevant. There is a real issue that what is happening is management by indicators – that is the focus is so tightly bent towards ticking the relevant boxes in the logframe and Project Document that the meaning on the ground is being overlooked. Some examples:

* New protected areas – the MTE had real difficulties in obtaining straightforward answers to what new key habitats have been included in the new PAs. The Project Document states that:

“*The project will build on the transboundary diagnostic analysis and will conduct a systematic conservation planning exercise at the KASE landscape level to ensure that both patterns and processes are covered in the landscape and that the potential impacts of climate change is taken into account*.”

It remains unclear if this exercise has taken place and if so what gaps have been covered as a result of the new PAs, but then again this may be just the result of the MTE not asking the right questions or having enough time to examine the scientific justification documents in Russian (something a native-speaking national consultant would normally do).

* Economic development – much of this is marginal. The Project Document went out of its way to stress that links must be made between economic development and conservation if the latter is to be successful. It succinctly put the point thus –

“*Conservation of biodiversity must become a matter of personnel self-interest*”.

So with that in mind, the MTE queries a number of the Project’s interventions:

* Why is the Project supporting wool-processing and berry-drying enterprises in Toskain, many kilometres distant from Markakol Zapovednik. How do these help with conservation of the Zapovednik? It may be argued that by providing women with income-generating activities this will reduce the poaching pressure on Markakol Zapovednik otherwise exerted by their families, but when questioned, the women concerned showed absolutely no awareness of biodiversity conservation, let alone that the grant initiative that they were to be part of had any link to the well-being of Markakol in any way. So, yes, the box is about to be ticked, but the impact on the ground for conservation is effectively none.
* Another example – the plantation of fast-growing tree species near KKNP. The issue here is that villagers illegally collect firewood from the forests close to the villages thereby degrading these forests. The National Park provided the people with firewood through the issuance of vouchers for collecting firewood from places considered acceptable to the National Park – often some distance from the villages and hence too expensive for the villagers in terms of time and fuel costs. The Project’s remedy is to grant-aid the planting of 20ha of land with willows and poplars because these are fast-growing species which the owner can sell to the local people at prices cheaper than those charged by KKNP. Apparently this ticks two boxes – it addresses the firewood issue and it demonstrates an example of how a local alternative livelihood can thrive. However, it does neither. First it will not change the local peoples’ behaviour. If they currently baulk at travelling 20km to the forest to collect firewood using KKNP’s vouchers, why will they travel 45km to the new site to buy marginally cheaper firewood – they will not. Second, if the villagers won’t travel to buy the wood, then the supposed alternative livelihood will cease business. The Project suggests that the plantation is also a demonstration site, one that can be used to encourage the local people to plant trees on their own land. But again, it does not. Even the Deputy Director of KKNP points to the obvious flaw that the fast-growing willows and poplars require wet land and there is no wet land around the villages. Planting 20ha is requiring some seriously heavy machinery and processes and as a result, expense – the grant is for almost US$ 200,000 (see [Annex VIII](#_Annex_VII_:_Projects initiated and )). Local people looking at this as a demonstration will see it as being way out of their financial league. As an incentive to encourage replication, it will be a failure – see also “*Firewood*” under paragraph 80[[26]](#footnote-26).
* Another example – the Buleryan stoves are a really good idea, but would appear to be a significant expense for people to replicate without grant-aid. To be really effective, the monitoring of the scheme has to be focussed upon emphasising the cost-savings that installation of the stoves achieve and hence what the break-even period is as well as what the subsequent pay-back will achieve in terms of savings on fuel (cost and time) within the lifespan of the stove. Links should then be made to the micro-credit facility to allow people to use this scheme, and to encourage them to do so, as a means of replicating installation across the area. At present, none of this is apparent.

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| **The MTE recommends** that the economic interventions are reviewed for their relevance to the biodiversity conservation aims of the Project. Where relevance is low, appropriate changes should be made to increase the links, or the intervention cancelled and the money re-used on a more relevant intervention. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| UNDP CO/ PIU | Review wool-processing and berry-drying in Toskain to better educate the beneficiaries as to why the grant is being made and stress links to biodiversity conservation. [NB. These grants (which are relatively very small) should not be cancelled as the loss of goodwill amongst the local communities would negatively effect the working of the Project at Markakol. Furthermore, they are close enough to the proposed PA of Kabinski that it could be beneficial to it in the future.] | Immediately | Improved links between the small grant project and biodiversity conservation. |
| UNDP CO/ PIU | Cancel the wood plantation project which is costly and shows no likelihood of achieving its aims and re-use the money for other more relevant interventions – e.g. see paragraph 80. | Immediately | Cancelled wood plantation project. |
| UNDP CO/ PIU | Review Buleryan stove project to improve the chances of local people adopting (and paying for) this mode of heating their houses, e.g. through the micro-credit facility. | Immediately | Increased opportunities for replication. |

### Replicability

The idea of the Project’s designers was to have many of the initiatives included in this Project replicated across the national PA system. Again and again, this idea is explicitly stated, e.g.

Output 5.2: “*The ultimate objective is to ensure that the project’s lessons and best practices will be replicated in other PAs in the country so as to strengthen and sustain the national system of protected areas. To facilitate the dissemination and replication of best practices and lessons learned, the establishment of a national training facility for PA managers and staff will be supported. This will make a significant contribution towards the strengthening of management throughout the entire national PA system*.” [MTE’s emphasis].

paragraph 70 : “*the project has many practices and lessons to offer for replication in most protected areas in the country*”;

paragraph 72: “*The project includes a series of … activities [that] will also serve as a catalyst for the overall strengthening of the national system of PAs in Kazakhstan through the implementation of necessary reforms pertaining to PA management, thereby enhancing the system’s ecological, financial and institutional sustainability*.”

Output 1.2: “*The institution of these changes through the project will provide benefits throughout the national PA system*.” [Project Document’s emphasis].

Output 3.2: “*The ultimate aim, however, is to use this body as a model that can provide a basis for the establishment of a permanent central national level PA planning and management coordination authority after the project ends. This would contribute towards the institutional sustainability of the project and the replicability of the project’s results throughout the national PA system*.” [MTE’s emphasis].

Despite putting a good framework in place to disseminate results (see paragraph 64), very little of importance appears to be being undertaken that will be useful for, or demonstrable to, the wider PA system of Kazakhstan. Too many of the key institutional changes and strengthening activities foreseen by the Project Document as key issues for replication throughout the PA system show little or no progress – the Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council, the Local Community Conservation Councils, the national training facility for PA managers and staff, staff management changes (job descriptions, annual performance reviews) – and while the expansion of the PA system may be a really good outcome, and if it comes about prior to the end of the Project then it will be a major achievement, but the Project was designed to achieve much more than PA expansion, awareness-raising, and livelihood development and as such it really needs to focus on ensuring that the opportunity is not missed to bring these to fruition … and to replicate them. Yes, maybe they will be difficult to achieve, but then all GEF projects include ambitious targets, and maybe the Project will fail (see paragraph 81) but what is certain is that if the Project does not even attempt to achieve them it cannot succeed.

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| **The MTE recommends** that the Project devotes the time and resources necessary to establish the Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council, the Local Community Conservation Councils, and the national training facility for PA managers and staff, and to replicating them to the benefit of the entire PA system. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| UNDP CO/ PSC/PIU | Develop, approve, and ensure implementation of, annual and quarterly work plans that give priority to establishing an Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council, Local Community Conservation Councils, and a national training facility for PA managers and staff. | From start of 1st Quarter 2010. | Councils and training facility operative and replicated in at least the three PAs identified by UNDP-CO as targets for replication. |

### Communications

Despite the Project having a fairly coherent communications strategy, and the view of UNDP-CO that communications are good, communications are failing the Project on three levels – externally, internally, and in accessing knowledge.

* External communications: While the Project is undeniably being successful, if a little slow, in raising awareness within the local populace of the Project area, the MTE is concerned about two aspects of external communications.
* The first is that there are so many mixed messages regarding the same issue coming from various stakeholders that it is clear there remains a lot of confusion both as to the issues themselves and the role and aims of the Project. The MTE ran into a great deal of contradictory information and in many cases just complete lack of knowledge. Furthermore, on a number of occasions the local stakeholders indicated that in their general conversations with each other, questions arose about the Project which they would like answering and there was no-one to ask, and many of the potential beneficiaries were awaiting news relating to grants and loans and were anxious because deadlines had passed without them hearing anything. It is clear from this that the Project, i.e. the PIU, is too remote from its target area. While it is understood that the villages are remote and living conditions harsh and as a result the PIU has been based in the nearest city, nevertheless the Project has to have a presence on the ground. This should probably take the shape of a full-time Liaison Officer, who is an educated local person, used to living in the locality, who can act as an information conduit in both directions. The person does not have to be an expert in any discipline, but someone who can learn about the Project, answer questions, promote its aims, and pass on news and information (e.g. about forthcoming staff visits, activities, events) to the local stakeholders and also act as a point of contact to answer (or obtain answers) to local people’s questions. While probably best to be based in Katon-Karagai village, other villages near to either KKNP or Markakol Zapovednik would suffice. In any case, the Liaison Officer will be required to be mobile and visit all (or at least key) settlements in the Project area regularly, and hence the Project will have to provide him/her with a vehicle. The alternative would be to appoint part-time Social Mobilisers in several of the key villages to continue to reinforce the awareness-raising messages and provide the means for information exchange, but this would be a weaker remedy than a single Liaison Officer, not least because it is unlikely to solve the problem of mixed messages[[27]](#footnote-27).
* The second is that there appears to be more emphasis on awareness-raising about the Project itself rather than the issues that the Project is trying to address. This may seem an odd comment given the amount of work done under Output 2.2 on the information campaigns carried out on rare species and fire prevention, but in interviewing stakeholders, the MTE found that most could provide some sort of information on the Project, but very little about the key issues such as over-exploitation of natural resources, new PAs, how livelihood development schemes are linked to conservation. The MTE is certainly not criticising the efforts made so far, but for the second half of the Project, the emphasis should be altered to focus more on general and specific biodiversity messages and less on the aims and activities of the Project itself. The major exception to this should be only where a communications strategy is working in close concert with a particular activity to assist that activity in achieving its aim.
* Internal communications: As has been indicated elsewhere in the report (see paragraph 29), the internal communications between the members of the PIU are simply not good enough and as a result the Project lacks the feeling of cohesiveness present in well-run projects. There appears to be little interaction between the various components and synergies between activities do not appear to be encouraged. Most of this can be put down to poor communications (although poor inter-personal relations among various members of the staff do not help) – the lack of brief, weekly coordination meetings; no back-to-office reporting[[28]](#footnote-28); no monthly work-planning meetings; and no centrally-available access to Project information via a computer or network. Although the NPM indicates that there is a network, it is clearly not functioning adequately or the staff would not in independent and confidential interviews all raise the same complaint.
* Accessing knowledge: The Project appears to be struggling to do almost everything itself without reference to the wider base of knowledge that could be accessed through UNDP and GEF. Indeed in some instances it almost seems to be trying to re-invent the wheel, and interviews and conversations seemed to suggest that the PIU is largely unaware of lessons learned and experience gained from other projects, not just in Kazakhstan but other countries too. The UNDP-CO must work more closely with the PIU and direct it to accessing relevant knowledge held in various databases and websites or by facilitating use of systems such as the Energy and Environment Network.

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| **The MTE recommends** that the Project and UNDP work together to improve communications to better deliver the activities on the ground. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| UNDP CO/ PIU | Recruit an educated local person inhabiting one of the “project villages” (preferably Katon-Karagai) as a full-time project Liaison Officer. | By end of 1st Quarter 2010. | Liaison Officer recruited. |
| UNDP CO/ PIU | Purchase a vehicle for the Liaison Officer adequate for travel throughout the Project area (preferably a 4x4). | By end of 1st Quarter 2010. | Transport for Liaison Officer. |
| UNDP CO/ PIU | Focus communications within the local communities more on issues than on the Project itself, paying particular attention to the wider issues that a given activity is trying to address. Each Project activity should have its own associated communication strategy implemented. | From start of 2010. | Issue-based communication strategies. |
| PIU | Establish a functioning computer network system where all Project-related information is accessible to all staff members. | Immediately. | Internal computer network accessible to all. |
| NPM/PIU | Instigate improved information flow through weekly coordination meetings, back-to-office reporting (meetings or notes to file), and monthly work-planning meetings. | From start of 2010. | Improved project coordination. |
| UNDP-CO | Increase access to knowledge by informing the PIU of what is available and facilitating access to it and to various networks. | From start of 2010. | Increase the PIU’s access to knowledge |

### Project Timing

#### Compensation

The MTE believes that the Project should be granted a no-cost extension of nine months in direct compensation for the 18-month period that the “German Project” is being implemented over. Although some of the problems the Project has faced, or is facing, are due to internal failures, the concurrent implementation of a second complete project was not foreseen in the original design and hence was not allowed for in its timing. Although the second project has involved mainly procurement, and a Procurement Specialist was recruited to the task, much of the onus has fallen on the NPM and even with his extra efforts and increased work hours, unsurprisingly some delay with the main Project’s activities has arisen as a result. In addition, the MTE is concerned that the legislative changes and motions necessary to provide legal designation for the four new PAs will not currently take place within the timeframe of the Project thereby rendering it somewhat of a failure. This would be a pity, since the Project is quite a good one. The indications above suggest strongly that the four PAs will come into being at some point, and the activities necessary for their gazettement will be included in the National Programme on PA Network Development for 2011-2013. However, given the Project is due to end in December 2011, there still remains a real risk that the legal process will not have run its course within the lifetime of the Project. In addition, the livelihood development activities within the Project are running well behind what could be expected, and an additional nine months (which would equate to another summer season) would be helpful both in consolidating enterprises established in 2010 and 2011, and would allow the programme to be expanded further in 2012.

The MTE stresses the “no-cost” element of the requested extension – under the financial assessment section above (see paragraph 24 *et seq*.), it is clear that the Project is under-spending, although granted some of this is down to slow implementation. However, the PIU was without a PA Expert for nine months (see paragraph 20) and the savings from this and from efficient tenders will provide a source of funds. In addition, the trilateral agreement covering the “German Project” states that any savings made from that can be used at UNDP’s discretion subject to German Government consent. Given that the main Project has suffered delays as a result of the implementation of its cousin, it would seem appropriate to direct any savings towards actions necessary to remediate those delays.

## The Planning Context

### Project Oversight

Oversight of the Project by the Project Steering Committee appears to be good. The PSC has met regularly twice yearly throughout the Project, once each winter in Astana and once each summer in the vicinity of Katon-Karagai. Reports indicate that the PSC is fairly effective in providing advice and decisions that are both timely and relevant, but the MTE notes that those meetings held in Ust-Kamenogorsk are attended largely by stand-in representatives already working in the city who report back to the nominated members. As a direct consequence, it is reported that these meetings are of limited effectiveness. While the “egalitarianism” of holding these meetings in both cities is understood, the MTE questions whether the geographic location is as important as maintaining continuity and effectiveness of representation and thus recommends that the PSC meets solely in Astana from hereon. Furthermore, the composition of the PSC is drawn solely from national and oblast level government and associated agencies with no local level representation. While the MTE recognises that the limited capacity of local people may make trying to incorporate them into the PSC difficult, and they may be too over-awed to make an effective contribution, the MTE recommends that this is tried and perhaps the Akim from Zhambyl Rural District and the Head of the *Mametek* NGO[[29]](#footnote-29) could be invited to join the PSC, provided that no conflict of interest is seen in having beneficiaries on the PSC.

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| **The MTE recommends** that the PSC meets only in Astana in order to improve the continuity of representation and the effectiveness of meeting. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| PSC | Agree to hold its meetings only in Astana. | With immediate effect. | PSC meetings in Astana. |

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| **The MTE recommends** that the PSC considers incorporating local representatives amongst its members. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| UNDP-CO/PSC | Explore the possibility and effectiveness of inviting two local representatives onto the PSC. | With immediate effect. | Two local representatives on the PSC. |

#### UNDP Role

The MTE Leader is frequently critical of the seemingly unnecessary UNDP bureaucracy that blights the implementation of many UNDP-GEF projects. Almost all the Project teams and managers that he has encountered complain about this aspect of project implementation and how the procedures and the time involved cause major delays and difficulties with implementation. There were no such complaints from members of the PIU on this Project and the procedures appear to be running smoothly. There seems to be close collaboration between the UNDP-CO and the PIU, or at least with the NPM, and although the UNDP representatives visit the PIU and/or the Project site very rarely, the NPM calls on the UNDP-CO almost every time he is in Astana on other business. However, the MTE believes given the degree of the problems besetting the PIU (see paragraph 76 *et seq*.), and particularly the need for the NPM to feel himself part of a bigger team with which he can share the burden of Project delivery (see paragraph 77), and finally the need for UNDP to increase access and the flow of knowledge to the PIU (see paragraph 68), the UNDP-CO needs to take a more proactive support role to the PIU and especially to the NPM. Concrete recommendations are provided under paragraphs 68, 78, and 81.

### Sustainability

The sustainability of the Project is difficult to assess at present since too little has yet been achieved on the ground. There has been good learning from other projects’ experiences, both GEF and other donors, and this will stand the sustainability of this Project in good stead. The institutional sustainability is mixed – the administrations of the PAs are being strengthened through training, provisioning of equipment, and legislative and financial improvements, and although managerial and staffing improvements appear to be being neglected, these changes are likely to make a long-term improvement to the effectiveness of protection afforded to the PAs. Unfortunately, the other suggested institutional innovations in the Project design are showing no progress, namely the Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council (Output 3.2) and the Local Community Conservation Councils (Output 4.4) and this casts a shadow over the long-term relationships with associated communities. The long-term financial sustainability of the Project appears to be one of its stronger suits at present. There is strong Government commitment to financing all of the increased PAs’ recurrent costs arising from the Project and Oblast Akimat support for financing the micro-credit facility, both despite the ramifications of the recent financial crisis. With the recent first signs of global financial recovery, the sustainability of these commitments is likely only to increase. Furthermore, much work is being done to increase the sustainable financing of the PAs from non-budgetary sources. The social sustainability also appears quite strong. There remains strong interest in the Project amongst local stakeholders despite slow implementation of its livelihood development aspects and the creation of the first Initiative Group, now the NGO *Mametek* is particularly encouraging. If this can be reproduced in other villages, and such organizations given a real voice through the Local Community Conservation Councils, then significant long-term progress will have been achieved. Similarly, the large investment so far made into education and awareness is bringing results slowly and if efforts are increased and methods more closely targeted the social sustainability can only improve. The economic sustainability is hard to call at present because only one project (pasture management) has so far been implemented. The selection of pilots for the small grants programme and the enterprises being considered for loans through the micro-credit facility with one exception (wood plantation) look economically sound and should have a high probability of success. Given that the MTE has to provide a single ranking, it does so evaluating the likely sustainability of the Project as **Satisfactory**.

### Establishment of the New Protected Areas

The progress made on the establishment of the four new PAs and the re-definition of the boundaries of existing ones, is one of the highlights of the Project’s achievements to date. A combination of good work by the Project and considerable commitment from the Government has led to a situation where the Government has included the establishment of these sites, and the re-definition of boundaries, within its sectoral programme for 2011-2013. While the MTE casts no aspersions on the Government’s commitment to this process, in fact quite the opposite – we are discussing here when the PAs will be designated not if – it does draw attention to the fact that even with the best will the required processes take time. As noted in paragraph 39, the designation “*Ecological Corridor*” was introduced in 2006 under the *Law on Protected Areas* and the establishment of such a corridor between the West Altai Reserve and KKNP will be the first time it has been implemented in Kazakhstan. There are no barriers to this. However, the establishment of the new PA comprising four parts in the Markakol area is more problematic, requiring a draft law which an Inter-departmental Commission was reviewing concurrent with this MTE report being written. If successful, this draft law, which will provide the mechanisms necessary for the designation of this new category, will not be submitted to the Lower Chamber until September 2010. So if the gazettement process does not begin until 2011 at the earliest, there is only one year for this process to be completed within the Project’s lifespan. If the PAs are not designated before the Project ends, the terminal evaluation of the Project will be severely compromised since at the Project’s end, its major aims will not have been achieved, even if the processes are underway. This may have a significant knock-on effect for the approval of new GEF projects within the country. While the MTE recognises that the timing of the designation of these sites is now largely outside of its control, it urges the Project and UNDP-CO to apply whatever influence is needed to get the PAs gazetted before the Project ends. The recommended extension to the Project (see paragraph 69) will undoubtedly help, but may not be enough on its own.

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| **The MTE recommends** that the project and UNDP-CO use their influence as necessary to get the proposed new protected areas gazetted before the Project ends. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| NPD/PIU/UNDP-CO | Exert whatever influence is necessary to ensure that designation of the new PAs proposed by the Project are given top priority within the Government’s sectoral programme for 2011-2013 . | Starting immediately | Gazettement of the new PAs and boundaries before the Project’s end. |

## The Management Context

### Country Driven-ness and Coordination

There appears to be considerable country buy-in to the Project by the Government of Kazakhstan with State support being offered through an increased area of land brought under a protective designation, diplomatic agreements with the Russian Federation for transboundary cooperation on biodiversity conservation, and long-term commitments to increased funding for the PAs. Support is also forthcoming from the East Kazakhstan Oblast Akimat, including significant funding for the micro-credit facility. The Government continues to work closely with the UNDP-CO over the planning of its sectoral programmes in order to develop concepts for new GEF projects and to ensure that it is able to deliver the necessary financial and technical inputs to these, as it has done with this Project.

### Project Management

#### Project Implementation Unit

There are significant problems apparent within the staff of the PIU. Not quite dysfunctional, the team is riven with tensions and inter-personal conflicts leading to inefficiencies and ineffectiveness. At the root appears to be a clash between what could be loosely called “old style” management – a simple command and control system – and newer participatory styles of decision-making, or perhaps alternatively contrasted as a clash between vertical management by the NPM and horizontal expectations (and experience) of the staff. This difference of approach is also closely linked to three of the problem areas identified elsewhere in this report, namely relevance of interventions (paragraph 66), poor communications (paragraph 68), and lack of innovation (paragraph 70). If nothing is done, it is probable (providing there is no mass exodus of unhappy staff) that the Project will still deliver some of its aims, but so much more could be expected from it. The Project needs to be managed horizontally if it is to be effective. The staff have been hired for their expertise, therefore they need to be trusted enough to be given their freedom to deliver. They want the Project to be successful just as much as does the NPM. Indeed it appears that the core of the problems in the PIU are all centred around trust. On the one side, the NPM does not display enough trust in his staff to allow them to work semi-autonomously. Everything has to be justified over and over again before any new action is allowed, information that should be open to all within the Project is not shared as it should be (despite the NPM’s claims to the contrary), and the NPM does not appear to acknowledge that the Experts have skills, ideas and experience in their own fields. All of this leads the staff to have no respect for the NPM and in turn not to trust him or his ideas. This lack of trust on their part is similarly wrong since they fail to acknowledge his great store of experience within the discipline of PAs, within the geographic area, and perhaps most importantly his understanding of how governments work and the high regard with which key officials view him – the latter particularly important for achieving results on the ground. The view of a certain member of staff that she herself should be the NPM brings added confrontation within the PIU that should not be occurring, particularly since her view does not tally with reality because she clearly lacks (at present) the necessary attributes to be an NPM. Unless the disruption that this causes to the team can be solved through greater autonomy coupled with a more realistic understanding of her abilities (and constraints), then the UNDP-CO should think seriously about removing her from her post since although the Project requires horizontal over vertical management arrangements, there can still be only one NPM.

The MTE is not a psychologist, and the following remarks have no professional basis to back them up. Nevertheless, it seems pertinent to examine some of the factors affecting the NPM. Key amongst these seems to be intolerable pressure to deliver the Project successfully, and let us not forget that he has had to deal with a second project concurrently. While everybody is under pressure to succeed at their job, in the case of the NPM this seems to have crossed a line from being a beneficial motivation to a detrimental encumbrance . In short, the fear of failure is so great that it is affecting his ability to work to the bigger picture, hence the management by indicators syndrome described above (see paragraph 66). This also exhibits itself with the increasingly vertical management – the need for everything to be justified, the lack of information sharing, the lack of wanting to try anything that maybe new or outside the skeleton of the Project Document. The NPM has come to identify so closely with the Project that it has become part of his personality[[30]](#footnote-30) if the Project succeeds, then the NPM is a success; if it fails, the NPM is a failure. This is unhealthy and needs changing. The NPM needs to be reassured that he is part of a team delivering the Project, and that he is not solely responsible for it. While such reassurance might be difficult coming from the Government, although the NPD could play a role here, certainly a lot more help is necessary from the UNDP-CO (see paragraph 72). A culture of teamwork and of acceptable risk needs to be fostered so that ideas for the greater good may tried, rather than a Project Document being slavishly followed.

Should the NPM be replaced? This has been asked of the MTE by members of partner agencies as well as rhetorically of himself and in both cases the MTE believes the answer is an emphatic “No”. The Project is doing pretty well because of the NPM, not in spite of him. He has many good and important attributes that have been outlined in several places in this report, and while the negatives have been the over-riding part of this immediate discussion, they should not obscure his many strengths. What he requires is help – something that most people (or at least most men) find it very hard to ask for – pride and all that.

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| **The MTE recommends** that the UNDP-CO increases its supportive role to the NPM and the PIU during the second half of the Project to foster a greater team spirit within the Project and between it, the UNDP-CO and the CFH. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| UNDP-CO | Increase contact with the NPM through increased visits (see recommendation under paragraph 28) and at least weekly skype/telephone calls to discuss management issues as well as technical problems | Starting immediately | Intangible – but greater support to the NPM so that he feels more of a team. |

#### Innovation

The Project is to be congratulated on taking two innovative steps, namely the idea of developing “*Ecological Corridor*” as a new category of protected area within Kazakhstan; and the establishment of the Council of Project Managers to coordinate activities and foster information exchange between GEF projects operative within the country. It is not clear whether the former idea actually originated from the PIU or whether this was an idea generated from work by the FHC as part of the preparation of the Project during its gestation as part of the FHC’s sectoral programming for 2008-2011, but either way, the Project *per se* has been the catalyst. This is undoubtedly an important step forward for biodiversity conservation within the country and hopefully will be replicated at other sites to provide important links between existing (and new) PAs.

In stark contrast, the remainder of the Project is notable for its lack of innovation, indeed it seems hidebound to what has been done before or by what seems possible. There are a number of examples:

* Fishing: At Lake Markakol, the local population have been given permission in recent years to catch fish for their own consumption (this includes a protected species[[31]](#footnote-31)). Close scientific monitoring determines the level of harvest and permits are sold for catches up to this level on a weight basis. It appears that the quota has been falling, not because there is any noticeable effect on the fish stocks, but because the local people have not applied for permits to the full level of the quota. The point, therefore, is that fish stocks are in no way threatened by local demand, although poaching does remain a problem because the Zapovednik staff are under-resourced in terms of engines and fuel for boat patrols. There is also, however, a demand for sport-fishing from tourists. Therefore, why not allow non-consumptive sport-fishing through a permit-based system in the same restricted areas used by the local populace? This would solve many problems and initiate many opportunities, e.g. if the permit fees are reasonably high, the Zapovednik could earn money (one of the issues the Project is trying to solve) which can be invested into new engines and fuel to increase anti-poaching patrols. Also, tourists would need boats and boatmen, tackle, guides, accommodation and food, all of which could inject money into the local villages’ economies and once the crucial link between conservation and livelihoods is made (to reiterate the Project Document “*Conservation of biodiversity must become a matter of personal self-interest*”), those whose livelihoods depend upon the tourist fishing will become involved in anti-poaching activities. So why is this not happening? Apparently because no mechanisms exist – and yet that is exactly what a GEF project is meant for, to overcome existing barriers. During the de-briefing meeting in Astana, the MTE was informed by the FHC that sport-fishing had been considered by the FHC and was to become permitted at Lake Markakol[[32]](#footnote-32). This is excellent news (although why the Project remained unaware of it remains a mystery) and it is recommended that the Project acts quickly to take advantage of this initiative[[33]](#footnote-33).
* Firewood: The firewood problem at KKNP is also ripe for innovation and yet instead of looking at solutions aimed at solving the real problem, the Project has gone off at a tangent with plantations of fast-growing species that are deeply suspect (see paragraph 66). The focus needs to be on changing current behaviour, which is not going to happen until a solution is found which is cheaper than going off and cutting firewood locally – where “cheaper” is a combination of time, transport costs, wood purchase costs, and convenience. Therefore, why not develop community forests either on villagers’ own land or on land designated for the purpose by the National Park? There are numerous examples the world over of community forests being successfully managed for fuel. The UNDP-CO could supply examples. Back-of-the-envelope calculations done by the MTE with the Deputy Director of KKNP suggests that approximately 2.5 ha of mature plantation would supply 1,000 people with enough firewood for a year[[34]](#footnote-34). Given say a 50-year rotation to enable trees to grow to maturity for felling and a population of 20,000 people dependent on firewood, this would appear to require 50 ha times 50 years or 2,500 ha of forest to be set aside (from KKNP or on private plots) to provide firewood sustainably to the local population, i.e. <1% of the total forested land within KKNP of which at any one time, only 50 ha will be clear-felled[[35]](#footnote-35). The remaining mixed age structure of the plantation would be attractive to a wide range of biodiversity. The local people would be responsible for the administration of the planting and felling – a good function for the Local Community Conservation Councils proposed under Output 4.4 – while the National Park Administration could determine the plot or plots of land to be re-zoned. Messages such as “*Plant trees for half-a-day and have free fuel forever*” would help mobilise the local population to a much greater extent than the currently proposed demonstration plantation 45 km away and the whole concept could be packaged as “*Tree-planting Day*” in the same way as “*Earth Day*” and be promoted through schools to get children involved with long-term benefits.
* Micro-credit: The micro-credit facility is yet another example. The Project has done really well to find a micro-credit provider to administer the fund which provides the lowest interest rates and the widest form of collateral as well as working with the Oblast Akimat to provide (annually) a source of funds for the facility. However, the MTE cannot quite come to terms with the fact that interest rates will be up to 16% and that the central tenet of any micro-credit scheme – that is that the borrowers do not have to put up collateral – is broken here since most borrowers will be forced to secure their loans against their homes. Why has the Project not set up its own scheme with its own rules and its own interest rates (set just to cover the basic administrative costs rather than earning a profit for the provider)? While it is noted that the level of social development in Kazakhstan is much higher than in Bangladesh (where micro-credit was first developed) or in Africa (where it is widely used) and the size of the loans will need to be concomitantly higher and therefore may need a degree of collateral, the present arrangements seem overly cautious and burdensome and are unlikely to generate high levels of entrepreneurship (or investment in, say, energy-efficient stoves) among the local population. A scheme tailor-made to the needs of the local population, administered initially by the Project in conjunction with the Oblast Akimat and the KKNP administration (and/or other PAs if appropriate) and later handed over directly to the relevant PA with the necessary annual audits conducted through the auspices of UNDP, would surely be more effective and would again provide the important link between improved livelihood opportunities and biodiversity conservation (see paragraph 10). While this idea is not new globally (a number of GEF projects have already successfully gone down this road) it would appear to be new in Kazakhstan and if successful could act a s a model for other PAs in the country (see also paragraph 84).

This lack of innovation is one of the main sources of conflict within the PIU discussed above (paragraph 10). All the staff complained that they had to justify their ideas for new approaches over and over again and even then many of the ideas were still refused. The NPM has many good traits and great self-belief, it was evident to the MTE that on occasions this crosses the line into stubbornness where new ideas/approaches are simply not accepted. Part of this comes from an inflexible approach to implementing the Project Document – its not there so we can not do it – and part comes from the fear of failure (discussed in more depth above – see paragraph 77). The latter point is key because there cannot be innovation without risk; all innovation runs a high probability of failure, but the Project’s operating partners (UNDP, the FHC, and the PSC) must cultivate a supportive environment in which the Project can take those risks free from the fear of failure. Better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all.

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| **The MTE recommends** that UNDP-CO and the CFH the risk management environment of the Project to better foster innovation within the Project’s activities. | | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** | |
| UNDP-CO, NPD, PIU | Ensure that the balance of risk management relating to activities is not overly-weighted towards guaranteeing success and by that stifling innovation within the Project. The NPM should be reassured that in attempting something new, risk of failure is inevitable, and acceptable levels of this risk should be discussed and agreed. | From start of 2010. | | Intangible – a project environment where innovation is fostered. |

#### Adaptive Management

The Project’s adaptive management has been good. So far, there have been only two major external issues to contend with, the most significant of which has been concurrent implementation of the “German Project” (see paragraphs 22-23). The additional work has been covered by promoting Ms. Ardak Sailaubayeva to Procurement Specialist and recruiting Ms. Olga Sushkova in her stead as Project Financial and Administration Assistant. The extra managerial load has fallen upon the NPM who has increased his work hours to cope with it, but inevitably some delays have occurred as a result. The other issue concerns the supposed changes to the legislation that the Project Document suggests are pursued. However, it became apparent that because several other GEF projects operating in the country had their own requirements to improve the legislative framework, the Government could not entertain several sets of independent amendments. The NPM, therefore, suggested a joint initiative to coordinate the changes required through a series of meetings in Astana of all the GEF NPMs to develop a single list of changes needed. This became the “*Concept on the introduction of amendments and changes in legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan related to biodiversity conservation*” that has been endorsed by the Government and is now obligatory for implementation.

### Technical Management Issues

#### Project Indicators

There are a number of minor technical issues concerning the Project’s indicators that should be clarified. These have been a cause for concern to the PIU and have been raised at a PSC meeting, but since no one was sure of who had the authority to agree changes, the Project has awaited the MTE to make recommendations. These recommendations are listed in the box below and include the suggested deletion of one indicator in its entirety and some minor changes to the wording of four others to increase their clarity and applicability. The final authority for the approval of any changes to the indicators remains UNDP-GEF’s Regional Technical Adviser in Bratislava.

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| **The MTE recommends** that the Project indicators are re-examined and minor changes effected. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| PIU/UNDP-CO/UNDP-GEF Bratislava | Agree and adopt the amendments to the logframe indicators as below [Underlines shows changes] | Immediately | Agreed revision to logframe |
| **Indicator #** | **Suggested change** | **Reason** | |
| 7. | Awareness level has increased by 60% points; support degree on biodiversity conservation issues has increased by 30% points. | Ambiguity – the existing indicator could mean an increase of 60% of the baseline figure of 27.5% meaning the target is 27.5 x 1.6 = 44%, or it could mean that the target is 27.5 + 60 = 87.5%. The changes ensure the latter is correct. | |
| 9. | Performance indicator: Rate Incidence of human-caused fires  Target: Incidents of human caused fires in PAs have reduced by 50% - a) total number; b) total area; and c) area/fire | This indicator needs amending because a simple number of fires measure does not reflect the full impact. The three measures introduced allow for a measurement of awareness (decreased number of fires); conservation impact (total area burned by fires); and effectiveness of fire-fighting (area burned per fire). | |
| 12. | Annual recurrent costs for PAs’ management do not require additional donor support. | This indicator is meaningless in the current context since no mechanism exists by which external donors can pay recurrent costs. It is unknown where the baseline figure came from but is believed by all to be erroneous. The MTE suggests this indicator should simply be deleted. | |
| 14. | Performance indicator: The number of renewed traditional, sustainable activities enterprises initiated or expanded by Project support.  Target: 12 examples of sustainable traditional practices of resources use are revived enterprises supported. | While the spirit of the original wording is acknowledged, it causes significant problems. There are no “*traditional*” activities such as handicrafts in the region – people simply made what was needed. The word “*renewed*” beggars the question why did it die out before, and suggests that the activity was not sustainable. “*Renewed/revived*” also means that “new” businesses will not count towards the indicator, which is silly. What appears to be important to the MTE is livelihood development that does not conflict with, or supports, biodiversity conservation, hence “*sustainable enterprise*” would seem to convey this. Despite lobbying of the MTE to reduce the target number from 12, the MTE sees no reason to reduce it. | |
| 15. | Income of surveyed participants exceeds baseline. Income of enterprises recipient of Project support deliver profits in their first year of operation and increased profits (above inflation) in their second year. | The change is aimed at overcoming people’s reticence about disclosing their full incomes and discarding a baseline figure whose source is unknown. What is key to supported enterprises is that a) they are sustainable (i.e. they must make a profit) and b) that the profit increases as the business grows or consolidates. Given that the first enterprises will not start until late 2009, there are only two years for measuring. The change also means that the target is measurable – a condition of financial support should be the presentation of (independently audited?) annual accounts. The measure of inflation should be taken as the official Government rate, even though there is dispute as to whether this is really representative. For projects relating to increased energy-efficiency (e.g. provision of Buleryan stoves) “profit” should equate to savings made on baseline conditions. | |

**Note:** Double strikethrough = deletions; underlining = suggested new text.

#### Public Corporate Fund

Information arriving to the MTE three weeks after the mission and just prior to completion of the draft of this report, suggested that the Project is seriously considering setting up a Public Corporate Fund providing interest free loans to individuals and organizations. The legal framework for such funds indicates that the founders should be at least three NGOs, and the Project has begun to outline the needs of elaborating the organizational and financial structures of the fund, as well as its risk management. Options for the latter include collective guarantees (a singularly bad idea since a person running a business needs to be certain of its loan transfers, not have them beholden to other peoples behaviour – an unacceptable level of risk from the business owner’s viewpoint) or to place the fund’s capital on deposit and loan only an agreed percentage of the capital such that if there are defaults on loans, provision of further loans are delayed until the deposit interest covers the default – a much sounder idea. The MTE recommends that the Project pursue the establishment of a Public Corporate Fund while ensuring that the requirement for three NGOs does not become a stalling point (the idea outlined at the end of paragraph 80 may be a workable alternative), and also ensures that provision of such loans are closely linked to biodiversity conservation or the well-being of the nearby protected areas and that the beneficiaries clearly understand this link.

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| **The MTE recommends** that the Project pursue the establishment of a Public Corporate Fund or similar body to provide interest-free loans to individuals and organizations. | | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** | |
| PIU, UNDP-CO | Pursue the establishment of a Public Corporate Fund or other vehicle to provide interest-free (and collateral-free?) loans for livelihood development or conservation-related activities within the Project area. | From start of 2010. | | A fully-functioning vehicle providing interest-free loans |

#### Back-ups

One area in which the Project should be congratulated is in data security. The MTE found that most unusually, the Project actually does back-up its material and keep the copies safe from fire, theft and loss. Each PIU member has their own external hard drive which they keep themselves at home and take on field trips with them, while the data is simultaneously written to CDs which are kept in a fire-proof safe located within the NPM’s office. While there is no written policy regarding back-up schedules, the process appears to be carried out approximately once a month. This is the only weakness, and the MTE recommends that a more formal and frequent schedule is implemented. Any computer passwords should be listed and kept separate in the NPM’s fire-proof safe in case of accidents or emergencies.

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| **The MTE recommends** that the frequency of computer back-ups to hard drives and re-writeable CD/DVDs is increased to once a week and that all staff should undertake this routinely as a matter of policy. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| NPM/PIU | Formalise and implement policy of backing-up computer discs once a week. | Immediately | Increased data security. |

#### Alternative Financing of Protected Areas

The Project has spent considerable time examining the possibilities for alternative financing for PAs and, in particular, what new services can be provided. By and large, these have been small scale tangible services primarily based on tourist revenues. The MTE is aware that the UNDP-CO is interested in looking at other services such as carbon-offset trading under the Kyoto Protocol (which Kazakhstan recently signed) and watershed services. While things like the latter may have restricted appeal or opportunity within Kazakhstan, opportunities may present themselves in an international context, e.g. safeguarding water supplies for China. With due respect to Kazakhstan, the means to implement most of these concepts, as well as the provision of other services, are beyond the capacity of most national consultants and if UNDP is keen to explore these avenues further, the MTE recommends a short consultancy be let to an international specialist who could review the opportunities and constraints within a national context.

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| **The MTE recommends** that an international consultant be hired to review the opportunities, scope, and constraints of alternative financing of the target PAs. | | | |
| ***Responsibility*** | ***Task*** | ***Time frame*** | ***Deliverable*** |
| UNDP-CO/PIU | Agree TOR and recruit an international specialist in alternative financing of PAs. | By end of 2nd Quarter 2010. | Report outlining tangible possibilities for alternative financing mechanisms |

# Recommendations

Approximately in order of importance as perceived by the MTE.

* The Project must devote the time and resources necessary to establish the Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council, the Local Community Conservation Councils, and the national training facility for PA managers and staff, and to replicating them to the benefit of the entire PA system.
* The economic interventions should be reviewed for their relevance to the biodiversity conservation aims of the Project. Where relevance is low, appropriate changes should be made to increase the links, or the intervention cancelled and the money re-used on a more relevant intervention.
* The Project and UNDP should work together to improve communications to better deliver the activities on the ground including a Liaison Officer.
* The UNDP-CO should make visits to the PIU in Ust-Kamenogorsk at least every four months during 2010 and at least half-yearly thereafter in order to facilitate efficient functioning of the PIU and resolve any conflicts.
* The UNDP-CO should increase its supportive role to the NPM and the PIU during the second half of the Project to foster a greater team spirit within the Project and between it, the UNDP-CO and the CFH.
* UNDP-CO and the CFH should re-balance the risk management environment of the Project to better foster innovation within the Project’s activities.
* The project and UNDP-CO must use their influence as necessary to get the proposed new protected areas gazetted before the Project ends.
* The Project should pursue the establishment of a Public Corporate Fund or similar body to provide interest-free loans to individuals and organizations.
* The UNDP-CO should provide the PIU with training and assistance as necessary to develop an impact monitoring programme to provide increased feedback and improved decision-making capability over its activities.
* The Project indicators need to be re-examined and minor changes effected.
* The objectives of Output 4.2 require clarification and implementation should be fast-tracked to ensure completion of deliverables.
* The frequency of computer back-ups to hard drives and re-writeable CD/DVDs needs to be increased to once a week and that all staff should undertake this routinely as a matter of policy.
* The PIU/UNDP should review the accounting procedures with regard to project management costs and those activities attributed to Outcome 5 to ensure accurate reporting and to provide for better future management decisions.
* The Project needs to produce an English-language version (or at least some pages) on its website to raise awareness within the international community.
* The PSC should consider incorporating local representatives amongst its members.
* The PSC should meet only in Astana in order to improve the continuity of representation and the effectiveness of meeting.
* An international consultant should be hired to review the opportunities, scope, and constraints of alternative financing of the target PAs.

# Lessons Learned

* **Innovation involves risk**

Most GEF projects involve the need to overcome barriers which almost by definition involves the need to try something new. With innovation therefore an intrinsic requirement, it is therefore beholden upon the Project’s governing parties – the executing agency and UNDp – to foster a working environment that is conducive to innovation, i.e. one where the possibility of failure is recognised and accepted. That is not to say that risks of any agreed approach should not be properly reviewed and mitigated as far as possible, but an atmosphere of the need to guarantee success stifles innovation.

* **Presence on the ground is important**

Projects working in remote areas inevitably locate the implementation or management unit in the nearest town or city where communications and transport are best served. However, when, as in this case, that urban centre is still far away from the project site it becomes imperative that the project locates one or more persons within the project area. The MTE has seen the success of this in several projects, e.g. *Demonstrating New Approaches to Protected Areas and Biodiversity Management in the Gissar Mountains as a Model for Strengthening the National Tajikistan Protected Areas System*; and *Conservation of Wetland Biodiversity in the Lower Volga Delta*, and the difficulties engendered when this does not occur, as here.

* **Fully revise the Project structure if changes are made to it in the Inception Report**

Significant difficulties have been encountered in the evaluation because of inconsistencies between the Project Document and the Inception Report, caused because the latter did not fully revise the Project’s structure. Because the PIU is apparently referring to both documents to manage the Project, some confusion is also apparent and as a result has been introduced into this evaluation – see footnote #12. This shows the importance of providing a fully revised project structure vis-à-vis Outputs if any changes are made to it in the Inception Report. A revised logframe is not enough.

# Annex I : Mid-Term Evaluation Terms of Reference

Mid-term Evaluation of the UNDP/GEF Project **“Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity of Kazakhstani Part of Altai-Sayan Ecoregion”**

**PIMS Project number:** 2898

**Short project title:** Kazakhstan Altai-Sayan project

**Project Atlas number:** 00044281

This Mid Term Evaluation is initiated by the UNDP Kazakhstan as the Implementation Agency for this project and it aims to provide managers (at the Project Implementation Unit, UNDP Kazakhstan Country Office and UNDP/GEF levels) with strategy and policy options for more effectively and efficiently achieving the project’s expected results and for replicating the results. It also provides the basis for learning and accountability for managers and stakeholders.

This evaluation is to be undertaken taking into consideration the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy:

<http://thegef.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/mepoliciesprocedures.html>

and the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy: <http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html>

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives:

1. to monitor and evaluate results and impacts;
2. to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements;
3. to promote accountability for resource use; and
4. to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned.

A combination of tools should be used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project – e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators, PIRs, or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term review, audit reports and independent evaluations.

In accordance with the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Procedures the mid-term evaluation is recommended for all the projects with a long term of implementation (e.g. exceeding 5-6 years) or those at critical stage of implementation. In addition to the fact that said evaluation enables to gain an independent deep view of the progress attained, such assessment meets GEF Council decisions in respect of transparency and improvement of access to information at the stage of implementation. Mid-term evaluations are intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objective, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project. Such evaluation is expected to serve a tool to recognize or bridge the gaps in the primary assessment of relevance, effectiveness and cost-efficiency as gained from the monitoring exercise. The mid-term evaluation enables to assess the primary signs of the project success or failure and identify the necessary changes to be made. The mid-term evaluation shall be performed by an independent expert unrelated to the project development or implementation.

The evaluation will play a critical role in the future implementation of the project by providing advice on: (i) how to strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring function of the project; (ii) how to ensure accountability for the achievement of the GEF objective; (iii) how to enhance organizational and development learning; and (iv) how to enable informed decision – making.

The evaluation will have to provide to the GEF Secretariat complete and convincing evidence to support its findings/ratings. The consultant should prepare specific ratings on seven aspects of the project, as described in the 'Reporting' section of this Terms of Reference. Particular emphasis should be put on the current project results and the possibility of achieving the objective and outcomes in the established timeframe, taking into consideration the speed, at which the project is proceeding.

Project objectives

The Project includes series of activities aimed at softening and liquidating the most violent threats for biodiversity in PAs and enhancing PAs management effectiveness and their sustainable development. These activities will perform the role of improvement catalyst of all PAs system in Kazakhstan by means of implementing necessary reforms in the field of PAs management for achieving ecological, financial and institutional sustainability. The Project will be based on the existing basic conditions when financing additional costs from the funds given by GEF and declared co-financing from other sources. Co-financing is given by MA, other state agencies, Akimats, private sector and other donors. The Project will carry out the assigned tasks and obtain suitable results in the period of 5 years.

The long-term goal of the Project is to help secure the globally significant biodiversity species in Kazakhstan.

The main Project’ objective is to enhance effectiveness of national PAs system in Kazakhstan for biodiversity conservation by demonstrating sustainable and replicable approaches to management in PAs in Kazakhstani part of Altai-Sayan Ecoregion.

Within the limits of the Project it is supposed to achieve the following 5 results:

* The PAs network has been expanded and PAs management effectiveness has been enhanced;
* Public awareness level in the field of biodiversity conservation and PAs has been increased and support on all levels during PAs work on biodiversity conservation has been provided;
* The existing legal and institutional framework for the purpose of strengthening the national PAs system has been enhanced;
* Local population has been involved in activities on biodiversity conservation and alternative livelihoods in PAs and buffer zones have been supported;

Monitoring and the Project activities evaluation have been carried out. PAs entered into cooperation and positive results and the Project experience are being introduced into PAs of the RK work.

The project document was signed in January 2007. Implementation of the Project started in March 2007. The total project budget is US$ 18,734,400 with GEF financing of US$ 2,395,700. The executing agency for the project is the Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture of the RK.

Project Beneficiaries:

* Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environmental Protection;
* SPA: Katon-Karagai National Park and Markakol State Reserve;
* Local communities living near the project sites;
* Private sector engaged in agriculture, fruit-processing industry and rural tourism within theproject sites;
* World community.

***2. Objective of the Mid-Term Evaluation***

The evaluation is focused on a comprehensive project assessment and enables to make a critical evaluation of administrative and technical strategies, problems and restrictions associated with the large-scale international and multilateral initiatives. The evaluation shall also provide the recommendations in relation to the strategies, approaches and/or activities in order to enhance the project capacities of achieving the expected outcomes. The evaluation results will be incorporated in the recommendations to improve the implementation of a given project stage in the forthcoming years.

Purpose:

1. To evaluate the overall project activities in relation to the objectives and expected outcomes as stated in the project document and the other related documents
2. To evaluate the project effectiveness and cost-efficiency
3. To critically analyze the arrangements of project management and implementation
4. To evaluate the progress attained so far in relation to the project outcomes
5. To investigate the strategies and plans intended for the timely achievement of the overall project goal
6. To list and document the first lessons learned in respect of the project design, its implementation and management
7. To assess the sustainability of project interventions;
8. To assess the relevance in relation to the national priorities
9. To provide the recommendations for the future project activities and, where necessary, for the project implementation and management arrangements.

In particular, the mid-term evaluation exercise will assess the progress of creating the basic information, alleviation of threats and identification of any constraints to the project implementation and their causes. It intends also to provide the recommendations for corrective measures to be undertaken. An effective measure to correct the problem areas identified, constraining the project implementation, will be required before the decision to be made in relation to the project continuation.

The project performance will be measured based on the indicators of the project’s logical framework (see Annex 2). Many of these indicators relate to the impact/implementation that will be applied in the impact assessment. The success and failure will partially be determined through the monitoring of the relative changes within the baseline conditions developed within one year of the project implementation. Where possible, the indicator species, sensitive to the changes of habitat and pressure increase, will need to be identified and monitored. In case of an identified shrinkage of the population of rare and endangered species the measures will be undertaken to identify the causes of such shrinkage and the alternative strategies will be developed to ensure the long-term welfare of the populations that will further be incorporated in the overall project site management.

The mid-term evaluation report shall be a separate document which will contain the recommendations and conclusions.

The report will be intended to meet the needs of all the related parties (GEF, UNDP, FHC of MoA, MEP, the project’s National Steering Committee, local communities and other related parties in Kazakhstan and foreign countries).

The evaluation exercise will embrace the project elements as follows:

Project concept and design: The evaluator will assess the project concept and design. He/she should review the problem addressed by the project and the project strategy, encompassing an assessment of the appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives. The executing modality and managerial arrangements should also be judged. The evaluator will assess the achievement of indicators and review the work plan, planned duration and budget of the project.

Implementation: The evaluation will assess the implementation of the project in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. Also, the effectiveness of management as well as the quality and timeliness of monitoring and backstopping by all parties to the project should be evaluated. In particular, the evaluation is to assess the project team’s use of adaptive management in project implementation. The evaluation exercise will measure the level of achievement of the project’s objective. It will also identify which interim results have been achieved and how they have contributed to meeting the ultimate project outcomes. This section ill be focused on the priority areas as follows:

Project outputs, outcomes and impact: The evaluation will assess the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by the project as well as the likely sustainability of project results. This should encompass an assessment of the achievement of the outcomes and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project. The evaluation should also assess the extent to which the implementation of the project has been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it has been able to create collaboration between different partners. The evaluation will also examine if the project has had significant unexpected effects, whether of beneficial or detrimental character.

Project Management and Administration: The evaluation should collect, document and assess the relevant elements and processes including: (i) Administrative procedures related to the project; (ii) Key decisions and interim results; and (iii) The main project implementation documents specifying how useful have the documents and reports been

Project Execution: The evaluation should assess the quality of services provided by FHC of MoA acting as the Implementing Agency (within the national UNDP execution) and PIU (project management cost-efficiency including the achievement of interim results in terms of quality, quantity and timeliness; and the monitoring system).

The Mid-term Evaluation will also cover the following aspects:

**3.1. Progress towards Results**

Changes in development conditions*.* Address the following questions, with a focus on the perception of change among stakeholders:

1. Have the globally significant mountain biodiversity of Kazakhstan been properly and adequately protected within the protected areas targeted by the project?
2. Have there been changes in local stakeholder behaviour (i.e. reduction of threats) that have contributed to improved conservation? If not, why not?
3. Is there distinct improvement in biodiversity information turnover and use in decision making among stakeholders?
4. Has awareness on biodiversity conservation and subsequent public participation in biodiversity monitoring and management increased as a result of the project?
5. Is there adequate territorial planning in place, or in progress, ensuring long-term conservation of agro-biodiversity and cultural values?

Measurement of change*:* Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before and after (so far) the project intervention. Progress can also be assessed by comparing conditions in the project site to conditions in similar unmanaged sites.

Project strategy: how and why outcomes and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results. Examine their relevance and whether they provide the most effective route towards results.

Sustainability: to which extent 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 local economy, etc.

**3.2. Adaptive management framework of the project**

Monitoring Systems

1. Assess the monitoring tools currently being used:
   * + - Do they provide the necessary information?
       - Do they involve key partners?
       - Are they efficient?
       - Are additional tools required?
2. Reconstruct baseline data if necessary[[36]](#footnote-36). Reconstruction should follow participatory processes and could be achieved in conjunction with a learning exercise[[37]](#footnote-37);
3. Ensure that the monitoring system, including performance indicators, at least meets GEF minimum requirements[[38]](#footnote-38). Apply SMART indicators as necessary;
4. Apply the GEF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool and provide a description of comparison with the baseline values.

Risk Management

1. Validate whether the risks identified in the project document, PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate. If not, explain why. Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted;
2. Assess the project’s risk identification and management systems:
   * Is the UNDP/GEF Risk Management System[[39]](#footnote-39) appropriately applied?
   * How can the UNDP/GEF Risk Management System be used to strengthen project management?

Work Planning

1. Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it:
   * Ensure the logical framework meets UNDP/GEF requirements in terms of format and content;
   * What impact did the retro-fitting of impact indicators have on project management?
2. Assess the use of routinely updated work plans;
3. Assess the use of electronic information technologies to support implementation, participation and monitoring, as well as other project activities;
4. Are work planning processes result-based[[40]](#footnote-40)? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning;
5. Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions. Any irregularities must be noted.

Reporting

1. Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management;
2. Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

**3.3. Underlying Factors**

1. Assess the underlying factors beyond the project’s immediate control that influence outcomes and results. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project’s management strategies for these factors;
2. Re-test the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made;
3. Assess the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project.

**3.4. UNDP Contribution**

* 1. Assess the role of UNDP against the requirements set out in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. Consider: field visits; Steering Committee/TOR follow-up and analysis; PIR preparation and follow-up; GEF guidance;
  2. Consider the new UNDP requirements outlined in the UNDP User Guide[[41]](#footnote-41), especially the Project Assurance role, and ensure they are incorporated into the project’s adaptive management framework;
  3. Assess the contribution to the project from UNDP “soft” assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination). Suggest measures to strengthen UNDP’s soft assistance to the project management.

**3.5. Partnership Strategy**

1. Assess how partners are involved in the project’s adaptive management framework:
2. Involving partners and stakeholders in the selection of indicators and other measures of performance;
3. Using already existing data and statistics;
4. Analyzing progress towards results and determining project strategies.
5. Identify opportunities for stronger substantive partnerships;
6. Assess how local stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making. Include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project and suggestions for improvement if necessary;
7. Consider the dissemination of project information to partners and stakeholders and if necessary suggest more appropriate mechanisms;
8. Assess collaboration between governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;
9. Assess collaboration between implementation units of other related projects;
10. Assess local partnerships;
11. Assess transfer of capacity to the national institutions.

**3.6. Project Finance**

1. Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and provide an opinion on the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions, taking into account the project activity timeframe;
2. Review the effectiveness of financial coordinating mechanisms.

***4. Products expected from the evaluation***

The key product expected from this mid-term evaluation is:

The Mid-term Evaluation Report

The mid-term evaluation report will include:

* The facts and conclusions identified in respect of the issues to be reviewed in accordance with The Scope of Evaluation section

Evaluation of project impact on:

* + The institution assisted and its staff;
  + The final beneficiaries including specific groups;
* Project sustainability on the basis of:
  + The commitments of the governmental agencies in relation to the project objectives
  + Involvement of local organizations (participatory process)
  + Management and organizational factors
  + Financing
  + Staff development
* Recommendations for the future implementation of the project activities
* Lessons learned

The draft and final report will be prepared in the format as provided in Annex 1 hereto. The draft report will be presented to UNDP/GEF not later than 10 November 2009. The final report will be prepared on the basis of the comments to be obtained from the parties related. The deadline for the final report is 30 November 2009.

The report will be presented electronically and in hard copy, in Russian and English.

***5. Evaluation Approach***

The Mid-Term Evaluation will be done through a combination of processes including a desk study, site visits, questionnaires and interviews, with involvement of all the parties related but not limited by: FHC of MoA, UNDP, NCC, representatives of the governmental agencies of various levels, local authorities, local NGO’s, communities etc.

The evaluation team will be governed by the materials that available at: [www.undp.org/gef](http://www.undp.org/gef) as follows:

* UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results
* UNDP/GEF M&E Resource Kit
* Measuring Results of the GEF Biodiversity Program

The evaluation methodology is assumed to cover the aspects as follows:

* Desk study of all project documentation
* Consultations with FHC of MoA, UNDP, NCC
* Field visits (Astana, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Katon-Karagai, Urunhaika, Kurchum,)
* Interviews with related parties
  + FHC of MoA, its territorial departments and SPA’s
  + NCC
  + Local authorities
  + Local communities
  + NGO’s

***6. Evaluation team***

The Mid-term Evaluation will be carried out by team of one external consultant:

* International consultant - expert in areas of international projects’ monitoring and evaluation with the focus on biodiversity conservation, biodiversity, agriculture, forestry and hunting economies, sustainable livelihoods, participatory approaches;

Consultant is responsible for the successful completion of the evaluation and finalizing the Mid-term Evaluation report. Consultant is to be familiar with the region and have basic knowledge of the project area (such as region’s biodiversity, socio-economic and legislative context, threats to biodiversity)

Team Qualities:

* Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
* Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches;
* Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
* Recent knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
* Recent knowledge of UNDP’s results-based evaluation policies and procedures
* Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resource management projects;
* Recognized expertise in the management and sustainable use of biodiversity in temperate ecosystems;
* Familiarity with protected area policies and management structures in Kazakhstan;
* Demonstrable analytical skills;
* Work experience in relevant areas for at least 10 years;
* Experience with multilateral or bilateral supported conservation projects;
* Project evaluation experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
* Excellent English communication skills.

Specifically, the international expert (team leader) will perform the following tasks:

* Lead and manage the evaluation mission;
* Design the detailed evaluation scope and methodology (including the methods for data collection and analysis);
* Assist in drafting terms of reference of the national consultant(s)
* Decide the division of labor within the evaluation team;
* Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs and partnership strategy (as per the scope of the evaluation described above);
* Draft related parts of the evaluation report; and
* Finalize the whole evaluation report.

Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for a position. Applications are welcome from anyone who feels they can contribute to the team because they possess three or more of the listed qualities. Obviously the more qualities that can be demonstrated, the better the chance of selection.

Joint proposals from two independent evaluators are welcome. Or alternatively, proposals will be accepted from recognized consulting firms to field a complete team with the required expertise within the evaluation budget.

The evaluation will be undertaken in-line with GEF principles:

* Independence
* Impartiality
* Transparency
* Disclosure
* Ethical
* Partnership
* Competencies and Capacities
* Credibility
* Utility

The evaluators must be independent from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of assistance. Therefore applications will not be considered from evaluators who have had any direct involvement with the design or implementation of the project. This may apply equally to evaluators who are associated with organizations, universities or entities that are, or have been, involved in the Altai-Sayan project policy-making process and/or its implementation. Any previous association with the project, FHC and its affiliates in three project sites, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, UNDP-Kazakhstan or other partners/stakeholders must be disclosed in the application. This applies equally to firms submitting proposals as it does to individual evaluators.

If selected, failure to make the above disclosures will be considered just grounds for immediate contract termination, without recompense. In such circumstances, all notes, reports and other documentation produced by the evaluator will be retained by UNDP.

If individual evaluators are selected, UNDP will appoint one Team Leader. The Team Leader will have overall responsibility for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products. Team roles and responsibilities will be reflected in the individual contracts. If a proposal is accepted from a consulting firm, the firm will be held responsible for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products and therefore has responsibility for team management arrangements.

***7. Implementation Arrangements***

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation lies with UNDP Kazakhstan. It is the main operational point responsible for liaising with the project team to set up interviews with stakeholder, arrange field visits and co-ordinate with the Executing Agency and other counterparts. UNDP Kazakhstan will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team.

The timeframe for submission of the first draft of the report: 7 weeks upon signing the Contract. The report will be submitted both electronically and in printed version, in Russian and English.

The report should be submitted to UNDP Country Office in Kazakhstan (to the attention of Ms. Victoria Baigazina, mailing address: 26 Bokei khan St., Astana; Tel.: +7(7172) 59-25-50).

Prior to approval of the final report, a draft version shall be circulated for comments to government counterparts and the members of the project steering group: UNDP, National Project Coordinator, NCC members, members representing various organizations.

If any discrepancies have emerged between impressions and findings of the evaluation team and the aforementioned parties, these should be explained in an annex attached to the final report.

The activities and timeframe are broken down as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Timeframes and responsibilities** |
| Desk review | 3 days – international expert |
| Field visits, interviews, questionnaire, debriefing  Briefing of evaluation consultants | 12 days – international expert |
| Validation of preliminary findings with stakeholders through circulation of initial reports for comments, meetings, and other types of feedback mechanisms | 5 days – international expert |
| Preparation of final evaluation report (including comments) | 7 days – international expert, |

*Working days:*

Team Leader (international expert) – 27 working days

The process should commence no later than 05 August 2009.

# Annex II : Itinerary of activities of the Mid-term evaluation Mission

Key: PE = Phillip Edwards.

| **Date** | | **Activities** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mon | 12th October | am: Evaluator (PE) arrives in Astana.  pm: 1. Meeting with Head of Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP (Ms. Inkar Kadyrzhanova) and Deputy Resident Representative UNDP (Ms. Steliana Nedera). 2. Meeting with Chairman of Forestry and Hunting Committee (Mr. Erlan Nysanbaev) and Head of Forest and Protected Areas Department of FHC, and National Project Director (Mr. Kairat Ustemirov). |
| Tue | 13th October | am: 1. Travel to Ust-Kamenogorsk. 2. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Vladimir Cheranev). 3. Meeting with Project staff.  pm: 1. Meeting with Project Financial and Administration Assistant (Ms. Olga Sushkova). 2. Meeting with Project Procurement Specialist (Ms. Ardak Sailaubayeva). 3. Meeting with Project Biodiversity and Protected Area Expert (Ms. Dina Almatova). |
| Wed | 14th October | am: 1. Meeting with Director of Natural Resources and Nature Use Regulation, East Kazakhstan Akimat (Mr. Vitaly Chernetsky). 2. Meeting with Head of Regional Territorial Inspectorate of Forestry and Hunting (Mr. Amangeldy Kalmykov), Deputy for Hunting (Mr. Yerlan Upobayev) and Deputy for Forestry (Mr. Fedor Fedorov). 3. Meeting with Project Biodiversity and Protected Area Expert (Ms. Dina Almatova).  pm: 1. Meeting with with Project Social Expert (Ms. Olga Klimanova). 2. Meeting with with Project Economics Expert (Ms. Meruyert Sarsembayeva). 3. Meeting with Project Public Relations and Awareness-building Expert (Ms. Natalia Blokh). |
| Thu | 15th October | am: 1. Travel to Bolshenarym.  pm: 1. Meeting with Deputy Akim of Katon-Karagai District (Mr. Kairzham Saduov). 2. Travel to Katon-Karagai National Park. |
| Fri | 16th October | am: 1. Meeting with Director of Katon-Karagai National Park (Mr. Erlan Mustafin). 2. Meeting with Deputy Director of Katon-Karagai National Park (Ms Raushan Krykbayeva).  pm: 1. Registration of PE in border zone. 2. Meeting with Director of Aigulek Kindergarten, Katon (Ms. Rosa Baltabayeva) and Deputy for Education (Ms. Rimma Nugumanova). 3. Meeting with Head of School Forestry and Primary School Teacher, Lenin School, Katon (Ms. Saule Bapinova); Head of Eco-tourist Club and Geography Teacher, Lenin School, Katon (Ms. Mira Tleukhanova); and Head of Tourism and Education Division, Katon-Karagai National Park (Mr. Alexander Kobzev). 4. Second meeting with Deputy Director of Katon-Karagai National Park (Ms Raushan Krykbayeva). |
| Sat | 17th October | am: 1. Visit to Medvedka forest nursery. 2. Meeting with micro-credit applicant and potential beneficiary (Ms. Galiya Dyuzbeneeva). 3. Meeting with members of Public Organization “Mametek”, Katon village (Head of group and Director of children’s home: Ms. Gauhar Mozhanova; member and Director of secondary school: Mr. Bauyrzhan Toktaganov; member and farmer: Mr. Toktasyn Bakembayev; member and representative of local Akimat: Mr. Lev Ilyushkin; member and representative of Women’s Council: Ms. Kulbatsha Kundebayeva; and member and representative of Elder’s Council: Mr. Kaisa Abakou).  pm: 1. Visit to sustainable pasture management project. 2. Collection of experts’ reports via internet connection. 3. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Vladimir Cheranev). |
| Sun | 18th October | All day: Free visiting Katon-Karagai National Park. |
| Mon | 19th October | am: 1. Meeting with Director of Berel Division of Katon-Karagai National Park (Mr Igor Mesyazev) and Director of Rakhmanovskiye-Kluchi Zakaznik (also part of Katon-Karagai National Park) (Mr. Rakhimgalym Tokushem). 2. Meeting with small grant applicant and potential beneficiary (Mr. Sergei Shestakov) and NGO sponsor (Mr. Dimitri Gregoryev).  pm: 1. Meeting with Director of Uryl School (Ms. Amina Jumagulova). 2. Meeting with Akim of Zhambyl Rural District (Mr. Beimbet Bolbayev). 3. Meeting with micro-credit applicant and potential beneficiary (Ms. Marzhan Nurkasymova). 4. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Vladimir Cheranev). |
| Tue | 20th October | am: 1. Travel to Markakol Zapovednik (Urunhaika).  pm: 1. Report writing 2. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Vladimir Cheranev). |
| Wed | 21st October | am: 1. Meeting with Director of Markakol Zapovednik (Mr. Zhanat Arhabayev). 2. Meeting with Deputy Director of Markakol Zapovednik (Mr. Andrei Chelyshev).  pm: 1. Travel to Toskain. 2. Meeting with Akim of Toskain Rural District (Mr Mutar Aganakov). 3. Meeting with potential beneficiaries of small grant (Ms. Gulzana Sapabayeva, Ms. Barshagul Pemessinova, and Ms. Dariyagul Meimenbayeva). 4. travel to Urunhaika. 5. Meeting with National Project Manager (Mr. Vladimir Cheranev). |
| Thu | 22nd October | am: 1. Travel to Kurchun (5½ hours).  pm: 1. Meeting with Akim of Kurchun District (Mr. Altabek Seitov), Deputy Akim of Kurchun District (Mr. Dusenbi Alkhanov), and Secretary of Rayon Maslikhat (Mr. Kairulda Abilmazhinov). 2. Public meeting of entrepreneurs. 3. Travel to Ust-Kamenogorsk (5 hours). |
| Fri | 23rd October | am: 1. Flight to Astana. 2. Meeting with Meeting with Head of Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP (Ms. Inkar Kadyrzhanova) and Deputy Resident Representative UNDP (Ms. Steliana Nedera).  pm: 1. Meeting with Expert on Protected Areas in Head of Forest and Protected Areas Department of FHC (Ms. Svetlana Sarsenbayeva). 2. De-briefing meeting. |
| Sat | 24th October | am: Evaluator (PE) departs Astana |

# Annex III : Persons Interviewed

Alphabetic order.

#### UNDP / GEF

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Adriana Dinu | Regional Technical Advisor for Biodiversity for Europe and CIS (e-mail) |
| Inkar Kadyrzhanova | Head of Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP |
| Steliana Nedera | Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Kazakhstan Office |
| Victoria Baigazina | Project Officer, Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP |

#### Project Staff

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ardak Sailaubayeva | Project Procurement Specialist |
| Dina Almatova | Project Biodiversity and Protected Area Expert |
| Meruyert Sarsembayeva | Project Economics Expert |
| Natalia Blokh | Project Public Relations and Awareness-building Expert |
| Olga Klimanova | Project Social Expert |
| Olga Sushkova | Project Financial and Administration Assistant |
| Vladimir Cheranev | National Project Manager |

#### Forestry and Hunting Committee

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Amangeldy Kalmykov | Head of Regional Territorial Inspectorate of Forestry and Hunting (East Kazakhstan Oblast) |
| Erlan Nysanbaev | Chairman of Forestry and Hunting Committee |
| Fedor Fedorov | Deputy for Forestry, Regional Territorial Inspectorate of Forestry and Hunting (East Kazakhstan Oblast) |
| Kairat Ustemirov | Head of Forest and Protected Areas Department of FHC, and National Project Director |
| Maskat Elemesov | Deputy Head of Forest and Protected Areas Department of FHC, and National Project Director |
| Svetlana Sarsenbayeva | Expert on Protected Areas in Head of Forest and Protected Areas Department of FHC |
| Yerlan Upobayev | Deputy for Hunting, Regional Territorial Inspectorate of Forestry and Hunting (East Kazakhstan Oblast) |

#### Protected Area Administrations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Alexander Kobzev | Head of Tourism and Education Division, Katon-Karagai National Park |
| Amanzhol Nurgin | Assistant Forest Keeper, Medveka Forestry Nursery |
| Andrei Chelyshev | Deputy Director of Markakol Zapovednik |
| Erlan Mustafin | Director of Katon-Karagai National Park |
| Igor Mesyazev | Director of Berel Division of Katon-Karagai National Park |
| Rakhimgalym Tokushem | Director of Rakhmanovskiye-Kluchi Zakaznik (also part of Katon-Karagai National Park) |
| Raushan Krykbayeva | Deputy Director of Katon-Karagai National Park |
| Zhanat Arhabayev | Director of Markakol Zapovednik |

#### Local Government Administration

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Altabek Seitov | Akim of Kurchun District |
| Beimbet Bolbayev | Akim of Zhambyl Rural District |
| Dusenbi Alkhanov | Deputy Akim of Kurchun District |
| Kairulda Abilmazhinov | Secretary of Kurchun Rayon Maslikhat |
| Kairzham Saduov | Deputy Akim of Katon-Karagai Rural District |
| Mutar Aganakov | Akim of Toskain Rural District |
| Vitaly Chernetsky | Director of Natural Resources and Nature Use Regulation, East Kazakhstan Oblast Akimat |

#### NGOs

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bauyrzhan Toktaganov | Member of NGO “Mametek”, Katon village |
| Dimitri Gregoryev | Member of NGO “Eco-Altai”, sponsor of small grant applicant |
| Gauhar Mozhanova | Head of NGO “Mametek”, Katon village |
| Kaisa Abakou | Member of NGO “Mametek”, Katon village |
| Kulbatsha Kundebayeva | Member of NGO “Mametek”, Katon village |
| Lev Ilyushkin | Member of NGO “Mametek”, Katon village |
| Toktasyn Bakembayev | Member of NGO “Mametek”, Katon village |

#### Other Stakeholders

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Amina Jumagulova | Director of Uryl School |
| Barshagul Pemessinova | Potential beneficiary of small grant programme |
| Dariyagul Meimenbayeva | Potential beneficiary of small grant programme |
| Galiya Dyuzbeneeva | Micro-credit applicant and potential beneficiary |
| Gulzana Sapabayeva | Potential beneficiary of small grant programme |
| Marzhan Nurkasymova | Micro-credit applicant and potential beneficiary |
| Mira Tleukhanova | Head of Eco-tourist Club and Geography Teacher, Lenin School, Katon |
| Rimma Nugumanova | Deputy for Education, Aigulek Kindergarten, Katon |
| Rosa Baltabayeva | Director of Aigulek Kindergarten, Katon |
| Saule Bapinova | Head of School Forestry and Primary School Teacher, Lenin School, Katon |
| Sergei Shestakov | Small grant applicant and potential beneficiary |

# Annex IV : Summary Evaluation of Project Achievements by Objectives and Outcomes

Although the initial Project logframe was revised during the inception period, this consequently seems to have been abandoned. The present evaluation matrix uses the original logframe as presented in the Project Document.

Key:

Green = Indicators show achievement already successful or full expectation of achievement by end of Project.

Yellow = Indicators show some progress – achievement expected by end of Project with increased effort.

Orange = Indicators show poor progress – possibly unlikely to be achieved by end of Project

Red = Indicators show poor or no progress – unlikely to be achieved by end of Project

**Project Goal**: To help secure the globally significant biodiversity values of the Kazakhstan.

| **#** | **Aim** | **Performance Indicator** | **Baseline** | **End of Project Target** | **Delivery Status at**  **Mid-term Evaluation[[42]](#footnote-42)** | **Comments** | **HS** | **S** | **MS** | **MU** | **U** | **HU** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | **Objective:** To enhance the sustainability and conservation effectiveness of Kazakhstan’s National PA system through demonstrating sustainable and replicable approaches to conservation management in the protected areas in the Kazakhstani sector of the Altai-Sayan Ecoregion. | Populations of globally significant species | 12-15 Snow Leopard | Populations of endangered species have not decreased below baseline levels by year 5 and show an increase (over longer term than project) | Snow Leopard: no change | The species selected as indicators for this project are essentially meaningless in terms of indicating the Project’s impacts. Both mammals are extremely rare and elusive and inhabit extremely rugged mountainous terrain, and neither the manpower nor the methods are available to obtain accurate population estimates of them. Training in new survey methods means that these methods rather than any real population increases may eventually be at the heart of any reported increases. The two bird species are trans-continental migrants – therefore any number of factors during their journeys or on their wintering grounds may be at the root of any changes perceived rather than project activities. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Altai Argali: 15-16 | Altai Argali: no change |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Imperial Eagle: 10 | Imperial Eagle: 40 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Black Stork: 25 | Black Stork: 60 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  | Total area of forests by year 1 of the project (2006) was 309,900 ha. | Monitoring in year 5 indicates that there has been no reduction in the total area from 2006 baseline | No change. | The PIU claims that as a result of the activities implemented by the project, including fire prevention campaign, introduction of the limited forest exploitation in buffer zones, there were no fires registered and no clear-fell harvesting in the area. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | **Outcome 1**: SPAs network is expanded and PAs management efficiency is improved | Total project territory protected areas coverage | Total area of two PAs is 718,517 ha | Expansion of the area to 814,557 ha | No change. The scientific justification and feasibility studies for four new PAs have been prepared and now approved by the local authorities and submitted to the FHC. | Berkutaul included in the Project Document was added to KKNP prior to Project start-up hence is now included in the baseline figures.  While Govt. intent is clear, procedures may mean that the four are not gazetted until after the end of the Project. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *4* | METT scores for two PAs | MSR – 40  KKNP - 51 | Annual increase in METT scores for two PAs for duration of the project | Markakol Zapovednik - 48  Katon-Karagai National Park - 60 | METT score surveyed in June 2009 (shows a small increase on 2008 levels of 44 and 58 respectively). |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *5* |  | 5. Legally defined new PAs boundaries | Existing PAs boundaries | New PAs boundaries are legally defined | Demarcation of the boundaries of the Markakol Zapovednik has been completed on the ground. The official permission for land use was received from the Government for Markakol Zapovednik. | 27,931ha added to land now officially reserved for Markakol Zapovednik. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *6* |  | 6. Inclusion of key natural habitats in PAs | Key natural habitats do not have PA status. 4 areas | Key natural habitats have Protected Area status. | Scientific justification for four key sites have been submitted to the FHC. Land management projects were developed for the sites intended for establishment of PAs; the sites were reserved for establishment of PAs. | Similar to indicator #3.  MTE unable to determine how the four sites selected fill existing gaps in PA system in terms of habitats. Possibility that gazettement process will not be complete within lifespan of the Project. However, reservation of land is complete – now awaiting for official approval. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *7* | **Outcome 2**: Awareness level among the public in the field of biodiversity conservation and PAs is increased and support in all levels within PAs’ work on BD conservation is rendered | Awareness level and support degree on biodiversity conservation issues among different stakeholders (based on survey results) | Survey results of year 1 showed that awareness level among the population (1,000 people) was 27.5%. | Awareness level has increased by  60% [points], support degree on biodiversity conservation issues has increased by  30% [points]. | Awareness level on biodiversity conservation issues among different stakeholders has increased by 20% [points], above baseline. Support degree on biodiversity conservation issues among different stakeholders has increased by 10% [points]. | 2nd survey done in June 2009 of 1,030 people. The levels achieved (1/3 of target at half-way stage) appear low for this stage in the project which is worrying given the inputs made. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | Awareness of PAs’ role, boundaries and regulation | Baseline survey (year 1) –  24% of population is aware of PAs’ role,  boundaries and regulations. | 60% of surveyed local population has confirmed awareness of PAs’ role, boundaries and functioning regulations. | Awareness level now at 39% as of June 2009. | 15% points rise out of 36% points needed is about 40% of the increase necessary at the half-way point, so as with indicator #7 this appears low for this stage in the project and is worrying given the inputs made. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Rate of human caused fires | Average number of human caused fires in PAs in 2000–2005. Four fires. | Incidents of human caused fires in PAs have reduced by 50%. | Zero incidents of human-caused fires in PAs. | Good work achieved toward this indicator. Indicator requires change to three measures thus (see paragraph 83):  a) total number = awareness  b) total area = conservation impact  c) area/fire = fire fighting effectiveness |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | **Outcome 3**: Existing legal and institutional framework is enhanced for the purpose of the PAs system strengthening | Appropriate legislation and enabling regulations | Current obstacles to effective PAs management (additional financing opportunities, tourism regulation and control, no public involvement) | Legal obstacles and constraints to effective PA management are considered removed through independent evaluation | The Project took part in developing the “*Concepts of the State Forest Policy*” that will facilitate amendments to relevant legislation. Development of additions to the Forest Code is in progress. | Progress is good but still open to delays in government processes. Increased lobbying would help. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | Collaboration in transboundary territories management | There are no transboundary agreements and programmes | Essential transboundary agreements are developed, signed and are being implemented. (research, anti-poaching, CITES compliance) | Agreement on establishment of transboundary territory “*Altai*” endorsed by the Governments. Signing of the agreement is included in the work plans of both Governments for 4th quarter of 2009. Regulations for the Council for “*Altai*” have been submitted for endorsement by the parties. | Basic agreements should be in place by end of 2009. Specific agreements re research, anti-poaching, and CITES compliance will hopefully follow by end of Project. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | Annual recurrent costs for PAs’ management do not require additional donor support. | External donors: $41 000/year Government: $2,000,000/year | External donors: 0  Government: covers all the recurrent costs | No changes yet for either measurement.  Recommendations on expanding paid services rendered by PAs are being developed to defray part of PA expenses. | MTE recommends deleting this indicator (see paragraph 83) since there are no mechanisms for external donors to pay recurring costs. Donors can pay for services hence the Project is looking to expand the list, e.g. watershed services, carbon sink. It is unknown where baseline figures came from. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | **Outcome 4**: Involving of local communities in activities on biodiversity conservation and alternative livelihoods within PAs and buffer zones are being supported | Participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes for PAs management | Fragmented and uncoordinated | All relevant stakeholders are involved in decision- making process. | The initiative group “*Marmatek*” continues its work; the experience of creating the initiative group will be transferred to the Markakol area in due course. | Despite establishment of initiative group, they remain uninvolved in decisions of KKNP management.  There appears to be no progress towards establishing mechanisms for including participation of stakeholders in decision-making. Apparently tried to involve Elder’s Council but not successful – KKNP simply reported results of its own decision-making. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | The number of renewed traditional, sustainable activities | None at present | 12 examples of sustainable traditional practices of resources use are revived | Six pilot projects identified and either underway or awaiting final decision for funding. Micro-credit scheme also developed and considering first applications for loans. | Good but slow progress being made – pilot project should have been underway by this stage. Relevance of some projects is a cause of concern.  Indicator requires re-wording – see paragraph 83. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | Income generated out of sustainable activities by surveyed participants | KZT 13 000 ($121) | Income of surveyed participants exceeds baseline | Income of population remains at the baseline level. | Indicator requires re-wording – see paragraph 83.  Even with change, no progress made on this indicator because only one pilot project currently up and running, although those planned are likely to result in increased earning/savings. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | **Outcome 5**: Monitoring and evaluation of the project activities are carried out. Cooperation between SPAs is established, the Project positive results and experience are introduced within PAs' work of the RK. | The number of methods, approaches and lessons for replication have been demonstrated within other PAs in Kazakhstan | None | Management models and approaches designed within the Project are being used in three other PAs in Kazakhstan | The Project involves 3 other PAs that are not part of the Project territory in seminars and other activities. | Namely *Zapadno-Altaiskiy Zapovednik*, and *Semey Ormany* and *Ertys Ormany State Nature Reserves.* While these 3 PAs may be involved in activities, none are, as yet, using management models and approached designed within the Project. The framework for replication may be in place, but as yet has replicated little of substance. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17 | The number of methods, approaches and lessons for replication have been demonstrated to other countries | None | Management models and approaches are being used in two countries | There is regular exchange of experience with the sister project in Russia and cooperation with Katunskiy Biosphere Zapovednik through a signed joint programme on the conservation of migratory species. | As with indicator #16, the framework for cooperation is in place but substantive management models and approaches developed by this Project and demonstrated to other countries appears to be zero. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Annex V : List of Participants at De-briefing Meetings

#### Official de-briefing held on 23rd October 2009

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Inkar Kadyrzhanova | Head of Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP |
| Maskat Elemesov | Deputy Head of Forest and Protected Areas Department of FHC, and National Project Director |
| Phillip Edwards | Mid-term Evaluator |
| Steliana Nedera | Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Kazakhstan Office |
| Vladimir Cheranev | National Project Manager |

# Annex VI : List of Project Steering Committee Members

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Representative** | **Institution** |
| 1 | Igor Koval | First vice-chairman of Forestry and Hunting Committee, Ministry of Agriculture, PSC chairman |
| 2 | Sergey Plotnikov | Deputy Akim of East Kazakhstan Region |
| 3 | Mukhtar Baizhanov | Deputy director of Daughter National Enterprise “Institute of Zoology” National enterprise “Biological Research Centre”, Ministry of Education and Science |
| 4 | Issa Baitulin | Senior research worker of Daughter National Enterprise “Institute of Botany and Phytointroduction”, National enterprise “Biological Research Centre”, Ministry of Education and Science |
| 5 | Andrey Vinokurov | Research worker of dendrology laboratory of Daughter National Enterprise “Altay botanical gardens”, National enterprise “Biological Research Centre”, Ministry of Education and Science |
| 6 | Bakytbek Duisekeyev | Head of fauna Department of Forestry and Hunting Committee, Ministry of Agriculture |
| 7 | Vitaliy Chernetskiy | Head of natural resources and nature management regulation Department, East Kazakhstan Region Akimat |
| 8 | Zhanar Mautanova | Head of foreign investments and projects Sectors Division under the Department of international co-operation, Ministry of Environment |
| 9 | Almagul Mazhrenova | Head of Agricultural, Water, Fishery, Forestry, and Environment Sectors Division under the Department of Economic Sectors Development, Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning |
| 10 | Turganbai Tazhmagambet | Head of land registry department of land resource management Agency |

# Annex VII : Draft Regulations of the Board of Trans-boundary Protected Area “*Altai*”

The Board of the trans-boundary protected Area “Altai” (further referred as Board) is a management body of the trans-boundary protected area “Altai”.

Long title of the Board – Board of the protected area “Altai”. Short title – Board of the TBPA “Altai”.

**Article 1.**

**Goal of the Board:**

Implementation of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of Russian Federation on foundation of the trans-boundary protected area “Altai” (further referred as Agreement);

Coordination of the joint activities of the TBPA “Altai” consisting of:

On behalf of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Katon-Karagai National Nature Park;

On behalf of the Russian Federation – “Katunski” State Nature Biosphere Reserve.

**Article 2.**

**Objectives of the Board:**

1. Elaboration and endorsement of the symbols of the TBPA “Altai”;
2. Endorsement of the Regulations of the Board of the TBPA “Altai”;
3. Development and coordination of the amendments to the intergovernmental Agreement;
4. Coordination of the activities to be implemented by protected areas that are part of the TBPA “Altai”;
5. Identification of the priority cooperation areas and activities to be implemented by the parties in the TBPA;
6. Elaboration and endorsement of the joint action plans of the protected areas that are part of the TBPA “Altai”;
7. Monitoring and evaluation of the achievements within the intergovernmental Agreement and their efficiency;
8. Monitoring and evaluation of the action plan implementation;
9. Preparation of the draft agreements related to bilateral collaboration.

**Article 3.**

**Status of the Board:**

The Board does not have a status of legal entity, stamp, and bank accounts;

The decisions of the Board have the status of recommendations.

**Article 4.**

**Board Authority:**

а) The Board operates on the basis of the given Regulations, endorsed at its first meeting;

b) The Board endorses the program and cooperation plan of the TBPA “Altai”;

c) The Board makes decisions (recommendations) during the meeting on the issues related to priority areas and joint activities for development of the TBPA;

d) The Board ensures information sharing on the issues related to the biodiversity conservation;

e) The Board supports the population awareness raising activities;

f) The Board prepares the joint publications in mass media and scientific resources;

g) The Board conducts joint trainings, workshops, conferences, exhibitions within the TBPA “Altai” Board meetings.

**Article 5.**

**Board Structure:**

The Board consists of 7 appointed representatives of each party and includes heads and specialists of the relevant governmental bodies that are in charge for PAs management, heads and specialists of the PAs that are part of the trans-boundary area, regional and local authorities, and NGOs.

**Article 6.**

**Board Members Authorities:**

а) Each Board member has one vote during the decision making processes.

b) The decisions of the Board are taken on the basis of consensus by the participating members. In case consensus is not achievable, the acting Chairman of the Board is taking a final decision;

c) The decisions of the Board are obligatory for all members of the Board and protected areas included in the TBPA “Altai”.

**Article 7.**

**Board Superior Body**:

а) The superior body is a meeting of the Board;

**Article 8.**

**Meetings of the Board:**

а) The meetings of the Board are held once a year in turn and in Russian alphabet order of the party countries’ names;

b) The first meeting of the Board is held in the country where the intergovernmental Agreement is signed and within the three months period after the ratification of the Agreement. The next meetings are held once a year in turn in the countries, that are parties of the Agreement;

c) Special meetings of the Board can be held in any time on the basis of the Board’s decision, or if a party sends relevant written request to the acting Chairman of the Board.

**Article 9.**

**Board Competence:**

The decisions of the Board are considered valid if 2/3 (more than 50%) of the members are present at the meeting.

**Article 10.**

**Chair of the Board:**

a) The meetings of the Board are chaired by one of the Board members selected by the Board for the period of one year.

b) The selection of the new Chairman is the last issue in the agenda of the Board meeting.

c) The authority of the Chairman comes into force right after the selection and ends after a new chairman is selected.

**Article 11.**

**The Functional Responsibilities of the Board Chairman:**

a) The Chairman leads the work and coordinates the distribution of the relevant documentation and Board decisions.

b) The Chairman organizes the next meeting of the Board.

c) The chairman leads the Board meeting.

**Article 12.**

**Functional Responsibilities of the Board Secretariat:**

а) Secretariat of the Board is formed by the administration of the PA of the country where the Board meeting is held and includes the specialists of the PA.

b) The Board Secretariat provides logistical support in preparation and distribution of the meeting invitations, records the meeting, and summarizes and distributes the minutes and other materials to the Board members.

c) The Board Secretariat prepares the agenda for the next Board meeting.

**Article 13.**

**Operational Costs:**

a) The operational costs for preparation and holding the Board meetings are taken upon by the recipient country. These costs do not include transportation and travel expenses;

b) The costs related to preparation and holding of the special meetings of the Board are taken upon by the initiating party. These costs do not include transportation and travel expenses;

c) Transportation and travel costs related to Board meeting are covered by each party;

d) The financial sources include the following, depending on the decision of the parties:

From the budget of the relevant governmental bodies of the parties – Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Ministry of the Nature Resources and Environment of Russian Federation;

From the budget of the parts of the TBPA “Altai” - Katon-Karagai National Nature Park of the Republic of Kazakhstan and “Katunski” State Nature Biosphere Reserve of Russian Federation.

*(During the period of the implementation of the projects “Conservation and Sustainable Use of biodiversity of Kazakhstan and Russian Parts of Altai-Sayan Ecoregion” the operational costs related to the Board meeting organization and holding are covered by these projects).*

**Article 14.**

**Monitoring of the Implementation of the Board’s Decisions**:

a) The decisions of the Board are implemented by the Directors of PAs that are parts of the TBPA “Alatai” in accordance with the relevant national legislations of each country;

b) The Board of the TBPA “Altai” monitors the implementation of the taken decisions and action plans through reports of the PA Directors and specialists;

c) After studying the materials and approval of the reports the Board provides recommendations for the relevant governmental body.

**Article 15.**

**Work Groups:**

a) When necessary, the parties can form the work groups to address the issues requiring extra expert and technical elaboration. The Board defines the works scope and time frame for the work groups;

b) The work groups consist of the PA specialists. In addition, scientists and other specialists can be involved;

c) The work groups complete the activities in compliance with the Board’s decision and inform the Board on the results at the meeting.

**Article 16.**

**Financing of the Joint Projects:**

a) The joint programs and activities are funded by each party in compliance with the relevant national legislations.

b) The funds can be mobilized as grants, including international donors grant, voluntary contributions of individuals and organizations, and other sources allowed by the national legislations.

# Annex VIII : Projects initiated and approved for implementation within the project

1. **Sustainable Pasture Management in Katon-Karagai village**

Grantee: NGO “Mametek”

Budget:

US$ 31,400 GEF SGP

US$ 15,00 SGP KASE

US$ 13,600 Grantee in-kind

US$ 23,620 Other partners’ in-kind

Total project – US$ 83,620

Tasks:

* + Organization of cattle grazing in accordance with pasture rotation scheme.
  + Demonstration of improvement of pastures and hayfields by sowing permanent grasses
  + Revival of traditional seasonal grazing in remote pastures
  + Information and awareness improvement

1. **Demonstration of energy efficient stove “Buleryan”**

Grantee: Initiative group to be registered as NGO

Budget:

US$ 46,000 GEF SGP

US$ 8,000 Grantee in-kind

US$ 9,500 Other partners’ in-kind

Total project – US$ 63,500

Tasks:

* + Ten demonstration sites in seven locations where people are facing the firewood shortage
  + Installation of the stoves in different types of rooms (area, number of rooms, functional use).
  + Monitoring of energy efficiency indicators during one heating season.
  + Provision of consultations on operational indicators, installation requirement, purchase
  + Publication and distribution of information.

**3. Poplar and Willow Plantations**

Grantee: ?

Budget:

US$ 100,000 Grants Program UNDP/WB project on forestation (not yet approved)

US$ 50,000 GEF SGP

US$ 42,857 Grantee In-kind contribution

US$ 4,500 Other Partners’ in-kind contribution

Total project – US$ 197,357

Tasks:

* + Planting of poplar on 20 hectares as alternative to using NP forest resources.
  + Environmental awareness and training activities to demonstrate and disseminate this practice.
  + Publication of practical guidance for planting the poplars.

1. **Revival of traditional production of wood handicrafts**

Grantee: Shestakov Sergei Leonidovich

Budget:

US$ 8,500 SGP KASE

US$ 2,200 Grantee

Total Project – US$10,700

Tasks:

* + Organization of wood processing workshop in Uryl village by purchasing processing equipment
  + Marketing and branding of the handicrafts (training, planning, implementation, studying the traditional ornaments and designs)

1. **Wool processing workshop in Toskain rural district**

Grantee: initiative group of unemployed women

Budget:

US$ 6,000 SGP KASE

US$ 1,000 Grantee In-kind Contribution

Total Project – US$ 7,000

Tasks:

* + Organization of wool processing workshop by unemployed women
  + Purchase of the card machine
  + Marketing and branding of the handicrafts (training, planning, implementation, studying the traditional ornaments and designs)

1. **6. Processing of the forest by-products in Toskain**

Grantee: Group of unemployed women

Budget:

US$ 5,500 SGP KASE

US$ 1,600 Grantee In-kind contribution

Total Project – US$ 7,100

* + Organization of co-operative of unemployed women on gathering and processing forest by-products (drying berries, mushrooms, herbs).
  + Purchase of drying boxes
  + Marketing and branding of the dry products (training, planning, implementation, studying the traditional ornaments and designs)

Total 6 Projects in 2009: US$ 369,277

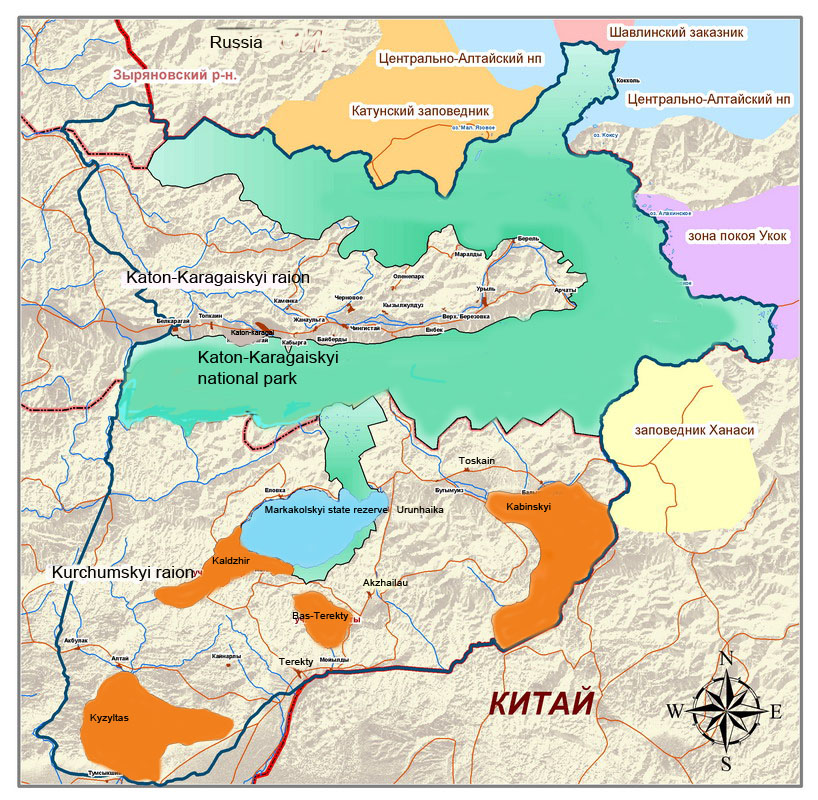
Total Small Grants Program of Altai-Sayan Project (SGP KASE): US$ 35,000

Total GEF Small Grants Program: US$ 127,400

Total GEF/WB Forestation Project SGP (not approved yet): US$ 100,000

Total in-kind contribution: US$ 106,877

# Annex IX : Map of Protected Areas Pertinent to Project



1. Consolidated comment: *This structure was cancelled – see Inception Report*. MTE response: please see footnote #12. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Consolidated comment: *The Centre for training the PA managers and staff is operational (“Tabigat Alemy”) and Altai-Sayan Project successfully cooperates with it*. MTE response: The MTE was not made aware of this throughout the mission despite asking. According to the Project Document, this Project contained activities to establish this centre and yet the MTE can find no indication that this has been the case, suggesting that if this centre is operational it must have been established by a different mechanism. Furthermore, additional comments received suggest that this activity was cancelled (see footnote #5) which would support the MTE’s understanding that nothing has been done towards this objective in this Project; and at the very least suggests some confusion as to the objective, its activities and its status within the PIU/UNDP-CO. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Consolidated comment: *The establishment of Visitor Centres is hampered by the absence of buildings or rooms for the centres in PAs. In KKNP the building requires complete reconstruction, while in Markakol there is no suitable building at all.* MTE response: The MTE is unsure as to the point of this comment. This situation must have been known at the time of design and hence should have been factored into all the work plans and budgets made by the Project. While the MTE acknowledges that the situation may be difficult, reconstruction/construction of such centres is clearly necessary if they are to be established. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Consolidated comment: *Cancelled as unreasonable (Inception Report).* MTE response: Not according to the version sent to the MTE which reads in the table under section II.4 “*Based on results of social study and capacity of the local communities, the project will provide consultations and technical support in establishment and operation issues of NGOs in Kazakhstan, as well as expertise and training in BD conservation and community involvement issues*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Consolidated comment: *Cancelled as unreasonable (Inception Report).* MTE response: There is nothing in the version of the Inception Report sent to the MTE that supports this statement, which also seems to be at odds with the comment made under footnote #2. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See footnote #12. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Consolidated comment: *Red wolf (*Cuon alpinus*) and Hooded crane (*Grus monacha*) were taken out from the list of indicators (Inception Report, Logical frame, page 35).* MTE Response: The Inception Report furnished to the Evaluator (dated August 2007; filename Inception\_report\_KASE-last.doc) still contains Red Wolf within the “Baseline” column of the logframe and hence this remains unclear. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Consolidated comment: *Hooded crane was replaced by Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*).* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Consolidated comment: *Incorrect information. Imperial eagle and black stork are in the Red Book of the RK – List of rare and threatened species of flora and fauna (Government RK Resolution #1034 as of 31/10/2006).* MTE response: This may be true, but the text is referring to global significance (as the indicators of a GEF project should be) and black stork which is included as one of the Project’s objective indicators is not included in the IUCN Red List because it are not considered to be globally threatened. Its presence on the Red List of Kazakhstan is irrelevant in this context. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Consolidated comment: *In order to implement conservation and increasing the population of the species, it is necessary to have accurate data on the current population and the threats they are vulnerable to. Since there was no such data on the project sites, the project has focused its efforts on gathering this data. Based on the inventory results it is planned to build artificial nestling places for birds of prey, which will facilitate the increase in population*. MTE response: While the intention is commendable, the time this will take makes the measure unsuitable for measuring the success of the Project itself which the purpose of an objective indicator. As an aside, the numbers of pairs of birds breeding within a given area as well as the number using artificial sites will need to be monitored to ensure that a successful colonisation of artificial sites is not at the expense of taking existing birds from natural sites, and that a real increase in the breeding population is achieved. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. with the notable exception of the Akim of Kurchun Rayon and his colleagues, whose self-importance and focus on economic benefits to those in Kurchun town (which lies outside the Project’s geographic boundaries) appears to preclude meaningful dialogue with the Project staff. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. After receipt of the consolidated comments, it became apparent that there had been some serious confusion between the MTE and the NPM both before the mission when the MTE was inquiring as to what version of the logframe was currently in use and later over the status of Output 3.2 – the one with the greatest changes; the Oblast Akimat PA Advisory Council being replaced by “*Legal mechanisms for improved collaboration between all stakeholders at the local level on SPA related issues are established*”. This confusion may have arisen through the translation process. Nonetheless, it has caused problems for reporting purposes. The MTE was aware of the changes suggested in the Inception Report provided to him, but there was no fully updated list of Outputs contained therein, although there was a logframe based around the indicators. When the MTE asked about this repeatedly (although maybe not clearly enough) he was informed that the structure of the Project was as per the Project Document, not the Inception Report (because the revised structure of Outputs had not been included there). This idea was reinforced in the MTE’s mind because the Inception Report has never been formally approved in writing by UNDP-GEF in Bratislava (although a verbal agreement was apparently received). [Because of the timing of the report (Copenhagen Climate Summit and theXmas holidays) this could not be verified by the MTE.] Therefore, this evaluation has been structured around the original project structure and changes made via the footnotes. **It is important to read the footnotes**, even though in places they are long. Trying to restructure the report ran into serious difficulties because of the inconsistencies between the Project Document and the Inception Report, e.g. the original Output 2.3 is re-numbered as 4.4, but then there is no indication as to what happened to the original Output 4.4, namely “*Local Community Conservation Councils are established*” which continue to be worked on. This shows the importance of providing a fully revised project structure vis-à-vis Outputs if any changes are made to it in the Inception Report. A revised logframe is not enough. The MTE stresses that he is aware now that the PIU is working to the Inception Report. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Consolidated comment: Only a part of Kalzhir site was included in the Markakol Reserve with the area of 27,931 ha. The remaining 21,200 ha stays outside the Reserve and is planned to be included in the new PAs by the project. Thus, all four key areas will be included into new PA. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. i) adaptation to climatic changes, and ii) construction of premises for storing fire-fighting equipment. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Consolidated comment: *Incorrect. Each Expert prepares back to the office reports in UNDP format*. MTE response: This was reported to the MTE by more than one staff member. In particular, the complaint was that the NPM did not file such reports leaving staff not knowing what was going on. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Consolidated comment: *Activities on the project impact monitoring are planned for 2010*. MTE response: Good. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The *Biodiversity Protection in the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve Project* (Latvia) had a particularly good and innovative impact monitoring programme and its Project Manager would be a good candidate to share experiences. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See footnote #12. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See footnote #12. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Minutes of the FHC Scientific Council #2 as of 18.11.2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Consolidated comment: *Included in the 2010 annual work plan*. MTE response: Good. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See footnote #12. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Some participants provide contrary evidence saying that although they are awaiting a grant, they have met with the Project staff on only one occasion. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Consolidated comment: *Unfortunately the involvement of local population in decision making on PA management is not realistic in control and command authoritarian PA governance. Because PAs themselves are not authorized to make any managerial decisions at the site level. Currently PAs have authority to make decisions on household issues. All other decisions are taken at the central level and depend directly on the available financial resources from the state budget. That is why the involvement of local people to the processes that are outside their real influence will add to destructive factors impacting their behaviour in relation to the National Park. The issues of nature resource management and distribution of wood are regulated by the current legislation. The limited wood for construction purposes is provided based on the applications that are annually reviewed by the Local Council that includes all stakeholders on the ground. This Council works for a long period and is focused on specific issue. This proves that when there is a real need for collaboration, there will always be a participatory tool for addressing this specific need. As for the Altai-Sayan Project Strategy in relation to establishment of the Local Conservation Councils, it is based on the following stages:*

    1. *Specify the scope of common conservation interests and cooperation options based on specific threats addressed by the pilot projects, developed by Altai-Sayan Project.*
    2. *Build institutional, social and financial capitals needed to establish the processes of sustainable planning and managing the areas adjacent to the PAs. This stage includes: Building structured institutions representing local communities (initiative groups, individuals, NGOs, cooperation linkages, elaboration of agreements, action plans, implementation of the projects, resource mobilization, capacity building). This was the focus of the first part of the Project and which, if the adequate support is provided, will last over next 10 years before the changes in mentality or behaviour can be observed. For the next period the Project plans to continue support of the existing capitals and to build a new one – financial. The Project over its period can only form the starters for establishment of the participatory self-sustaining local institutions that will continue after the Project ends.*

    *And for the logical framework the Project can take the traditional way. Establish the Councils by order from the governing structures, prepare the regulations, and even develop an action plan. Though, if the project is serious about introduction of innovative approaches, recommended by relevant international institutions, this traditional way will hamper the work.* MTE response: The MTE thanks those involved for this detailed response, much of which was not clear during the mission. The original evaluation of the Output has been revised upwards. The MTE commends the PIU for taking an approach tailored to the realities of the situation rather than following that ordained by the Project Document/Inception Report which in their mind was doomed to failure. The MTE wishes to make two points: 1) that although the current NPM was not incumbent at the time of the Inception Report, the updating of the approach to the LCCCs should have had a paper trail– maybe an updated Inception Report (it would not be the first project the MTE has dealt with that has had numerous such versions) – which would have made everything much clearer and shown that there was agreement with UNDP-CO and UNDP-GEF to this end; and 2) this explanation states under point 2 above that “*if the adequate support is provided, will last over next 10 years before the changes in mentality or behavior can be observed*”. This suggests that such support will be needed for ten years, while the Project has about three to run. It will be **very** important therefore, if having taken this approach because it is the right one to take, that the required post-Project support is put in place in such a way as to be sustainable so as to achieve the required “*changes in mentality or behavior*”. This will be something the Terminal Evaluation should take proper cognizance of. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Consolidated comment: As was said above there is a training Centre “Tabigat Elemi” established in the country that provides training for PA managers and staff. The project paid the Centre’s training services for the staff of the project PAs. MTE response: It remains unclear as to why, if the Project Document stated under Output 5.2 that “To facilitate the dissemination and replication of best practices and lessons learned, the establishment of a national training facility for PA managers and staff will be supported. This will make a significant contribution towards the strengthening of management throughout the entire national PA system” that such a training centre is already present in the country and that the Project is paying for its services. This does not seem to the MTE to be what the Project’s designers had in mind. Also, if the centre was established between the Project’s design and commencement, why is this not documented in the Inception Report and the approach of paying for its services verified in that way? Finally, given footnote #s 2 and 5, considerable confusion remains around this entire aspect of the Project, seemingly even inside the PIU. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Consolidated comment: *Altai-Sayan Project can not cancel this project since its implementation is not funded by the Altai-Sayan Project. The project was reviewed by Experts Panel of the GEF Small Grants Programme and the funding was approved by them. Altai-Sayan Project can only exclude this project from its portfolio and do not participate in its implementation or provide support to implementers. Regarding the project activities, during the planting and over the next two years of the project the following campaigns are planned to facilitate the involvement of the local people in fire-wood growing: celebration of the Forest Day annually at the day of plantation foundation; workshops in all rural districts and dissemination of published material about environmental and economic benefits and planting and growing techniques; development and carrying out of the Forest Classes in schools of seven rural districts, organization of seedlings production by school forestries for the local people; receiving feedback from the people through national park field divisions and rural Akimats. These activities will be facilitated by the Task Team that will include all stakeholders on the ground, which may later form a Local Conservation Council with specific targets. Thus, the functions of the plantation will include: 1) Free and unlimited seedlings for all who will want to grow the firewood on their land. 2) Monitoring site for the National Park to record the data for planning the plantations within the National Park boundaries. 3) Possibility for the school forestries to generate revenues for conservation activities by selling seedlings. 4) Seasonal jobs for 45 people living in Akmaral village. 5) Additional forested areas. 6) In 10-20 years firewood and construction wood for people of 4 villages of Chernovinski rural district at a price of at least 15% lower than that of the National Park. During the consultations with the stakeholders on the project development there was a discussion about possibility to establish a plantation on the public land. But Akimat, having agreed to find a plot of land, refused to support the community involvement for planting and looking after the seedlings. Thus, it was decided to put all efforts during the first two years for community mobilization activities with the prospects to establishment of public forests, when people are interested and ready to volunteer their work, and when the public forests will become their own initiative. National Park does not have an authority to decide about the planting fuel plantations on their land. Such decision can be taken only after forest regulation works, done by FHC, which are planned for 2012, if a contractor provides the relevant recommendations. The National Park will use the plantation for monitoring and recording the data needed for the future justifications during the forest regulation works*. MTE response: Nothing in this comment counters the main points made in the text. A) While the project activities listed are all worthwhile, the gains made through them are likely to be offset if the plantation itself is a failure or is not replicable – e.g. no wet land to grow willows/poplars on. The MTE again urges the Project to consult again with the GEF-SGP and re-design the project prior to its implementation. B) The functions listed are muddled and appear unsustainable – like the project itself – e.g. #1 says free and unlimited seedlings but #3 says the possibility of generating revenues by selling them. #4 says seasonal jobs for 45 people, but who will pay them if the seedlings are given away? If the money is to come from firewood (see #6) then the basic argument in the original text above is still not countered – will 15% cheaper be sufficient to encourage villagers to travel (and pay transport costs) to buy the wood, when time/convenience is one of the issues raised by the villagers? Where does the figure of 15% come from? How is it that the plantation will be able to sell wood 15% cheaper than KKNP? Is this (and the provision of free seedlings) sustainable once the Project finishes and if the plantation’s market has been decreased by local people growing their own firewood as a result of the Project’s campaigns and the free seedlings? C) The Project should not simply accept the Akimat’s refusal to support the community involvement. The issues here are of national importance for PAs and the Project should co-opt the help of the Oblast Akim and the FHC/Government (who implicitly agreed to support the Project’s aims when t hey signed the Project Document) (e.g. through the PSC) to persuade the Akimat to assist. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Consolidated comment: *Hiring the specialists is included in the 2010 annual work plan*. MTE response: This remains unclear. The idea of a Liaison Officer is for a **local person** to be employed – not a **specialist**. If the translation is such that the comment applies to a local person, then this is a positive response. On the other hand, if the translation really does apply to a specialist, then this does not meet with the idea in the text nor the recommendation. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Consolidated comment: *The* *Experts prepare back-to-the-office reports in UNDP format and are placed on the network*. MTE response – see footnote 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The two individuals concerned were amongst those who were most forthcoming and provided the most pertinent comments during the MTE interviews. They would also represent two of the geographic areas most involved with the Project. The MTE believes that the Akims of the Rayons, although perhaps the most obvious persons to add to the PSC, are actually the wrong ones since they are too remote from the Project’s on-the-ground activities and hence would fail to actually provide the desired level of local representation. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. And while the MTE is not a psychologist, he identifies this from his own personal experience. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The Altai lenok (*Brachymystax lenok*) is not included in the Red Book of Kazakhstan, but since it is an endemic species it is listed under rare and endangered species and is, therefore, subject to protection. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Consolidated comment: *Sport-fishing is allowed only for local population living in the buffer zone of Markakol Reserve. In order to go for the sport-fishing for tourists, the PA legislation of the RK should be amended*. MTE response: The Project, therefore, should assist the Government in amending the legislation to allow sport-fishing for tourists to provide benefits to the local population. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Consolidated comment: *Incorrect. The project works closely with the FHC and was commissioned with the task to develop the rules of sport-fishing for the needs of the local population, living in the Markakol Reserve buffer zone*. MTE response: This is good and is to be welcomed – but somehow the issue never got discussed in such terms during the mission, hence the text drafted here. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. 10 trees growing on a 10m x 10m plot required by each household of say on average 4 people. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Consolidated comment: *By the date of the interview, the Consultant involved in the development of this project, did not have the accurate calculations on the planned stock of the planted wood. The maximum volume of wood per hectare in this area cannot exceed 200m3. Therefore, the calculations should be revised. The fuel plantations are introduced into the National Park feasibility study that was developed with the project participation*. MTE response: The MTE is not a forester and has no idea what volume of wood is required to heat a household for a winter, nor how much wood is produced per hectare. The calculations in the text were back-of-the-envelope calculations made with the help of the Deputy Director KKNP to illustrate a point – that is why the details are shown in the text and the preceding footnote. The points made in the text remain valid irrespective of the fact that the calculations may have to be re-done. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. See p.67 of UNDP’s “Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results”, available at http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. See Annex C of “Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: approaches to sustainability”, available at http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. See section 3.2 of the GEF’s “Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures”, available at http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. UNDP-GEF’s system is based on the Atlas Risk Module. See the UNDP-GEF Risk Management Strategy resource kit, available as Annex XI at http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. RBM Support documents are available at http://www.undp.org/eo/methodologies.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The UNDP User Guide is currently only available on UNDP’s intranet. However UNDP can provide the necessary section on roles and responsibility from http://content.undp.org/go/userguide/results/rmoverview/progprojorg/?src=print [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Taken largely from the delivery reported in the PIR 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)