UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

GOVERNMENT OF UZBEKISTAN

"ACHIEVING ECOSYSTEM STABILITY ON DEGRADED LAND IN KARAKALPAKSTAN AND THE KYZYLKUM DESERT"

Goal: To achieve ecosystem stability on degraded land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum Desert, in Uzbekistan, thus reversing the spread of deserts, increasing carbon sequestration, enhancing habitats for biodiversity and achieving public health and socio-economic benefits, on a sustainable basis

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MID TERM EVALUATION REPORT

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Contents

List of Abbreviations

CACILM	**Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management**
CBD Sec	**Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity**
CMP	**Conservation Measures Partnership**
GEF	**Global Environment Facility**
DoF	**Department of Forestry**
FFI	**Fauna and Flora International**
GIS	**Geographical Information System**
Ha	**Hectares**
ILUP	**Integrated Land Use Planning**
MFD	**Main Forestry Department**
MTE	**Mid Term Evaluation**
MTET	**Mid Term Evaluation Team**
NGO	**Non Governmental Organization**
PIR	**Project Implementation Review**
PMT	**Project Management Team**
SLM	**Sustainable Land Management**
SSA	**Special Service Agreement**
ToRs	**Terms of Refrerence**
UNDP	**United Nations Development Programme**
UNDP CO	**UNDP Country Office**
UNDP HQ	**UNDP Headquarters (New York)**
UNDP TRAC	**UNDP "Target for Resource Assignments from the Core"**
ZVP	**Zoo-Veterinary Point**

INDEPENDENT MID TERM EVALUATION REPORT OF THE PROJECT "ACHIEVING ECOSYSTEM STABILITY ON DEGRADED LAND IN KARAKALPAKSTAN AND THE KYZYLKUM DESERT"

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Brief Description of the Project

Owing to its geographical and climatic characteristics, Uzbekistan is highly susceptible to environmental degradation, in particular its arid ecosystems. A major distinguishing feature of land degradation in Uzbekistan is loose sand and according to the Forestry Department some 2.3 million hectares in Bukhara Oblast and 4.5 million hectares in Karakalpakstan are affected by wind erosion.

The principal causes of land degradation affecting desert and semi-desert ecosystems of Uzbekistan are as follows and the project seeks to address that problems:

- Overgrazing
- Wood over harvesting
- Unsustainable agricultural practices

The project seeks to address them through a number of interventions designed to contribute to the following goal :-

Goal: To achieve ecosystem stability on degraded land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum Desert, in Uzbekistan, thus reversing the spread of deserts, increasing carbon sequestration, enhancing habitats for biodiversity and achieving public health and socio-economic benefits, on a sustainable basis

Which will be achieved by meeting the following objective :

Objective: To test, evaluate and promote innovative solutions to the problems of land degradation at a pilot scale in Kyzyl Rovat (Bukhara Oblast) and Kazakhdarya (Karakalpakstan) and replicate best practices in order to achieve ecosystem stability on degraded land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum Desert in Uzbekistan

This objective will be met by achieving the following outcomes :

Outcome 1: Plant species, having both strong ecological and economic benefits for succession in desert and semi-desert ecosystems identified and sustainable land management methods tested

Outcome 2: Mobile sands stabilized and degraded land rehabilitated in partnership with local communities

Outcome 3: Institutional and policy framework for integrated land use planning and management, strengthened

Outcome 4: Monitoring and evaluation, learning and adaptive management, implemented

In order to achieve these a project implementation budget of $ 3,217, 609 ($ 950,358.9 from GEF and $ 2,267,250 Co-financing, including 280,000 from UNDP core funds), in addition to the PPG of $ 200,841 ($ 49,641 GEF and $ 151,200 Co-financing) was agreed.

The project is implemented by UNDP and Executed by the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water, in collaboration with other government agencies.

1.2 Context and purpose of the evaluation

Mid Term Evaluations are a key component of projects, providing managers (at the project implementation team, project sites administrations, UNDP-Uzbekistan Country Office and UNDP-GEF regional and HQ responsible officers) with the independent feedback on the project's achievements, strategy and possible adjustments for more effective and efficient achievements of the project's results. The MTE also provides involved stakeholders with the independent views on project's implementation progress and serve as a tool for accountability of the project manager team.

The main objective is to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of project activities in relation to the stated objective and to produce plausible recommendations on how to improve the project management practices and sustainability of activities during and after the remaining two years of the project (scheduled completion in January 2012). The MTE serves as an agent of change and plays a critical role in supporting accountability.

Its main purposes are:

- to strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the project;
- to ensure accountability for the achievement of the project's objective of improving the sustainability of land management and delivering global benefits;
- to enhance organizational and development learning;
- to enable informed decision – making.

This MTE has been asked to focus on the following specific issues:

- Project concept and design, reviewing problems/issues addressed by the project and the project strategy, considering appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives.
- Implementation of the project in terms of progress towards project results, quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out.
- Project outputs, outcomes and impacts 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, inclusion of relevant stakeholders.
- Changes in development conditions, with a focus on the perception of change among stakeholders:
- Measurement of change: Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before and after the project intervention.
- Project strategy: how and why outputs and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results.
- Sustainability: Extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after the project has come to an end.
- The Project's Adaptive Management Framework
- Underlying Factors
- UNDP Contribution
- Partnership Strategy

1.3 Key Recommendations and lessons learnt

R4 In order to allow a clear demonstration of the cost effectiveness of different approaches there needs to be more data collected on "non-intervention" controls, and on current forestry methods.

R12 The Project would benefit from external support on ILUP to help design possible scale up to support this at Rayon level

R13 Exploratory discussions should be held as soon as possible at Rayon Level in the 2 target Rayons, to discuss the project providing support for integrated Land Use Planning, ideally as part of their Development Programme. Based on these discussions the project should consider providing support to one of the Rayons as a demonstration of Integrated Land Use Planning, or this output will not be achieved before the end of the project. Collaboration in this may be possible with either the UNDP Landscape Level Planning[2], or the EC supported Area Based Planning processes.

R19 The project should build on its good start on capacity building by putting the emphasis on the results of the development, rather than the delivery of development, through the use of competency standards, in identifying requirements, current capacity, and monitoring the improvement in capacity.

R25 The project needs to formalize its replication / scaling-up / promotional strategy for each component as soon as is possible as this will affect what it does, how and with whom.

R26 The project should ensure that its analysis of techniques allows it to report the cost-effectiveness, not just effectiveness of the different techniques of sand stabilization and re-vegetation.

R27 In partnership with other involved groups a Working Group should be set up to design a forward strategy on developing understanding of the economics of land degradation, and rehabilitation, including :-

- ***A capacity development programme, in partnership with CACILM and UNDP on the economic analysis of land degradation, including scenario modelling, using one, or both of the existing project sites as the learning example.***

- ***The development of a concept for expanding the economic analysis and scenario planning to demonstrate the importance to the economy of the country to tackling the land degradation – i.e. moving from it being seen as an ecological problem that needs money spent on it, to being seen as an economic and social problem that can have cost effective environmental solutions.***

R41 A proposal should be made by the Steering Committee to UNDP for extension of the project from 4 years to 5 years to allow it to not only develop, test and demonstrate techniques in the project area but for active promotion in the broader impacted areas of the country.

[2] This is a new project proposal developed by UNDP on Land Degradation Focal Area and still subject to funding.

Key Lessons Learnt

L1 It is important that the Inception process at the start of a project critically reviews the assumptions that have been made in the Project Document, and is empowered to make adjustments – within bounds. Sometimes it is stated that the Project Preparation process will have delivered a project that should not be adapted until the MTE – unless there have been clear changes in conditions. However sometimes projects, for perfectly legitimate reasons, are prepared with incomplete information and where it is clear with fuller information that some aspects need revision it is better to do that as soon as possible, and the MTE can be too late.

L2 Even when there are major issues to tackle there is a limit to what one project can do, and project design should not be over ambitious e.g. in how the results of the project will be taken up and used, especially if this is not under the control of the project, as this just sets a project up to fail.

L4 Many managers, in many different positions, in many organizations, are more experienced at identifying activities that will contribute towards an objective, rather than in techniques that will allow them to identify a clear chain of activities that will bring about a result. This means that many projects are better designed to deliver results and outputs rather than outcomes.

L6 effective teams require a mixture of experience and new ideas, and both top experts and people who really understand the local conditions.

L8 Problems with cash flow can seriously impact on activities, morale, and perceptions of a project. Although clearly rules have to be followed those rules need to be appropriate for the situations in which projects have to operate, and people need to understand how to interpret and apply them according to the situation.

L9 If society is to address the issues of SLM (and many other environmental issues) we cannot assume that the analysis and messaging that is appropriate for a Ministry of Environment will be the most effective with other agencies. Although Environmental Agencies clearly have an important role we will not be effective if we indicate SLM is an environmental issue that requires others to finance its solution, or to change their activities. We need to demonstrate that SLM is an economic, development and social issue which can be cost effectively solved through environmental solutions.

L10 Projects always take longer to establish, and to achieve outcomes, than is normally anticipated in preparation.

1.4 Overall Project Rating - Satisfactory

The project has made a good start in delivering a highly ambitious project, tackling very difficult issues, in a remote and difficult part of the country.

There have already been a number of clear successes from the project, and these are well recognized by the relevant government agencies who have already expressed a commitment to replicate the methods recommended by the project.

Although the first rounds of planning, budgeting and reporting were done very quickly, therefore without a rigorous process, and without the specific needs of UNDP being fully understood by a new team, the project has already identified many of the areas that could be strengthened, and with support from the CO, and the project's International Technical Advisor, they are improving these each round.

The MTET has made a number of suggestions in the body of the report for areas that could be improved – however many of the more substantial ones in this are comments on the Project Document and it is hoped that the MTE will assist in allowing revisions to be made.

2. Introduction

2.1 Project background

Owing to its geographical and climatic characteristics, Uzbekistan is highly susceptible to environmental degradation, in particular its arid ecosystems. The most serious ecological problems threatening the country's natural resources are incremental soil and water salinization, wind and water erosion, overgrazing and deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and the reduction in productive potential of arable land and pastures.

A major distinguishing feature of land degradation in Uzbekistan is loose sand and according to the Forestry Department some 2.3 million hectares in Bukhara Oblast and 4.5 million hectares in Karakalpakstan are affected by wind erosion. Sand is blown around by the wind with negative effects ranging from impact on people's health and well-being, reduced agricultural productivity, impact on roads and other infrastructure, contamination of water resources and environmental pollution, and morphological changes to land. In the case of the exposed Aral seabed, the sandy substrate has not had the chance to develop a surface skin which would prevent most of the wind erosion that is responsible for the raising of 70 million tonnes of sand and dust per year into the atmosphere. It has been estimated by local experts that up to five million people in Uzbekistan are affected directly, and a lot more indirectly, by wind-blown sand and dust. Some have given up and have migrated away from the desert to cities in Uzbekistan or even other Central Asian countries – communities are breaking up because of the impact of wind-blown sand.

Land degradation in Uzbekistan has two ultimate effects – ecosystem instability and poverty. In fact, these two effects are inextricably linked and each can cause the other. They are also part of a closed loop whereby degraded land leads to ecosystem instability and poverty forcing desert communities to further stress the fragile desert environment thus degrading the land even further and exacerbating the ecosystem instability and poverty.

The goal of the present project is to achieve ecosystem stability on degraded land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum desert in Uzbekistan, thus reversing the spread of deserts, increasing carbon sequestration, enhancing habitats for biodiversity and achieving public health and socio-economic benefits, on a sustainable basis. It will contribute to this goal by testing, evaluating and promoting innovative solutions to the problems of land degradation, particularly mobile sands, at a pilot scale in the selected localities of Kyzyl Rovat and Kazakhdarya, and other pilot sites of the project on an area of about 500 ha of degraded lands. This project is a part of the Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM).

2.2 Purpose of the evaluation

The main objective of this Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of project activities in relation to the stated objective and to produce plausible recommendations on how to improve the project management practices during the remaining two years of the project (scheduled completion in January 2012). The MTE serves as an agent of change and plays a critical role in supporting accountability. Its main objectives are:

- to strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the project;
- to ensure accountability for the achievement of the project's objective of improving the sustainability of land management and delivering global benefits;
- to enhance organizational and development learning;
- to enable informed decision–making.

Particular emphasis should be put on the current project results and the possibility of achieving all the objectives in the given timeframe, taking into consideration the speed, at which the project is proceeding.

The MTE is to be undertaken in accordance with the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html).

2.3 Audiences for the evaluation

The MTE of the Project is initiated by UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency. It aims to provide managers (at the project implementation team, project sites administrations, UNDP-Uzbekistan Country Office and UNDP-GEF regional and HQ responsible officers) with the independent feedback on the project's achievements, strategy and possible ways to its adjustments for more effective and efficient achievements of the project's results. The MTE will also provide involved stakeholders with the independent views on project's implementation progress and serve as a tool for accountability of the project manager team.

2.4 Key issues addressed

As well as the standard issues to be covered in a UNDP GEF mid-term evaluation the Terms of Reference requested that the Mid Term Evaluation Team (MTET) should specifically assess the following:

Project concept and design, reviewing problems/issues addressed by the project and the project strategy, considering appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives.

Implementation of the project in terms of progress towards project results, quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out.

Project outputs, outcomes and impacts 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, inclusion of relevant stakeholders.

Changes in development conditions, with a focus on the perception of change among stakeholders:

Measurement of change: Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before and after the project intervention.

Project strategy: how and why outputs and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results.

Sustainability: Extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after the project has come to an end.

Project's Adaptive Management Framework

(a) Monitoring Systems
- Assess the monitoring tools currently being used:
- Ensure the monitoring system, including performance indicators, at least meets GEF minimum requirements.

(b) Risk Management

- Validate whether the risks identified in the project document and PIR 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;
- Assess how the project's risk identification and management systems are applied and can further be strengthened.

(c) Work Planning

- Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it.
- Are work planning processes result-based? If not, suggest ways to improve work planning;
- Consider financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.

(d) Reporting

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

Underlying Factors

- 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;
- Review the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made;
- Assess the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project.

UNDP Contribution

- 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
- Assess contribution to the project from UNDP "soft" assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination).

Partnership Strategy

- Assess how partners are involved in the project's adaptive management framework:
    - Involving partners and stakeholders in the selection of indicators and other measures of performance
    - Using already existing data and statistics
    - Analyzing progress towards results and determining project strategies.
- Assess how local stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making; Include an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project and suggestions for improvement if necessary;

2.5 Methodology and structure of the evaluation

As specified in the MTET's Terms of Reference, the mid-term team has tried to go through a process that provides evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. We have tried to make it easily understandable by project partners and applicable to the remaining duration of the project.

The MTE evaluation was carried out by :-

- A Documentation review, a list of reviewed documents is included as an Annex.
- Interviews and questionnaires with UNDP Uzbekistan, the Project Team, The National Project Coordinator International Advisor, CACILM, a number of Project Board Members, Leaders and members of local communities cooperating with project.
- Field Visits were conducted to both field sites to allow direct observation of experimental plots and to meet with local communities, provincial and local officials and local experts.
- Participatory techniques and other relevant approaches for the gathering and analysis of data.
- Once the MTET had gone through and drawn preliminary conclusions the MTET facilitated a Project Team workshop to further explore issues identified, and to discuss draft conclusions and recommendations
- The MTE Report and ratings have been based on the full range of these activities.

2.6 Limitations and constraints

The MTET are happy that the MTE process was well supported by the Project and UNDP CO teams. Documents were supplied in advance, additional ones requested were made available, the itinerary was negotiated and agreed with all requested meetings arranged.

The only constraints were therefore the normal ones to be expected in MTE – that it is very early in the process, especially when there are issues of seasonality in the results, for there to be clear "results" to provide evidence for the evaluation. In addition there were some constraints due to the language constraints of the MTE team leader which meant that some internal reports were not available.

However despite these minor constraints the MTET felt that there was sufficient evidence available to allow an evaluation of progress to be made – and recommendations to be made that we hop will assist the team as it moves forward.

3. The Project and its development context

3.1 Project start and its duration

Project implementation officially started in February 2008 and is currently scheduled to finish in late January 2012. In accordance with the UNDP decision to reduce the implementation period from five to four years, the implementation period of this Project was shortened by 1 year, requiring more focused activities from all the stakeholders.

3.2 Problems that the project seeks to address

The principal threats to land degradation affecting desert and semi-desert ecosystems of Uzbekistan are as follows and the project seeks to address that problems:

Overgrazing

Land vulnerability is exacerbated by local residents who overgraze available pastures by domestic stock, in an effort to survive. As the situation worsens, farmers tend move further into marginal areas and to replace sheep with goats, which unfortunately complete the total denudation of land leaving it susceptible to wind action. Overgrazing of marginal land is particularly concentrated in the vicinity of settlements and around wells. In these areas, not only is the land denuded of all vegetation, but it is also prevented from forming the surface "skin" that is necessary to prevent wind erosion and begin the process of soil development.

Wood over harvesting

Local population cuts down trees and shrubs for wood fuel. Unlike former times, when population in deserts was mostly nomad and the population number was not large, contemporary settlements require an extensive amount of wood fuel for cooking and dwelling heating. Obviously the settlers tend to cut any wood available instantly around the settlements in the first place. Besides, availability of motor vehicles provides an opportunity to harvest wood from more distant areas when wood resources around a settlement are exhausted.

The desert and semi-desert forest ecosystems are composed of a complex of trees, shrubs and grass communities. Ecosystem diversity of desert and semi-deserts is low in comparison with other types of ecosystems, which makes them more vulnerable to any kind of outside interventions. Over harvesting of trees and shrubs by local population significantly lowers resilience of the ecosystem and results in its serious degradation

Unsustainable agricultural practices

Because of their vulnerability, rain fed, un-irrigated lands demand special attention in terms of their utilization for agricultural purposes. Inappropriate patterns of land use severely affect ecosystem stability and add to existing problems of land degradation.

3.3 Goal, objectives and outcomes of the Project

Goal: To achieve ecosystem stability on degraded land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum Desert, in Uzbekistan, thus reversing the spread of deserts, increasing carbon sequestration, enhancing habitats for biodiversity and achieving public health and socio-economic benefits, on a sustainable basis

Objective: To test, evaluate and promote innovative solutions to the problems of land degradation at a pilot scale in Kyzyl Rovat (Bukhara Oblast) and Kazakhdarya (Karakalpakstan) and replicate best practices in order to achieve ecosystem stability on degraded land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum Desert in Uzbekistan

Outcome 1: Plant species, having both strong ecological and economic benefits for succession in desert and semi-desert ecosystems identified and sustainable land management methods tested

Outcome 2: Mobile sands stabilized and degraded land rehabilitated in partnership with local communities

Outcome 3: Institutional and policy framework for integrated land use planning and management, strengthened

Outcome 4: Monitoring and evaluation, learning and adaptive management, implemented

3.4 Main stakeholders

The following key organizations was planned to involve directly in the implementation of the project activities in various roles. These were planned to discuss and confirm in a multi-stakeholder workshop which will be held at the inception stage of the project.

1. **The Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources** has been designated as the lead executing/implementing agency for this project and the National Project Coordinator (NPC), who will be nominated by the Government, is expected to be a senior official of the Forestry Department. The major share of the Government's contribution to the project in cash and in kind will be made by the Forestry Department. For example the Department will provide office premises and related facilities for the Project Implementation Unit in Tashkent (Outcome 4) and the Department's Oblast office in Bukhara and its Karakalpakstan office in Nukus, will serve as liaison centres for the Project. The Forestry Department will also be providing the services of its plant nurseries in both Bukhara Oblast and Karakalpakstan for the production of seedlings and other plant material required for the upscaling of the research results to the pilot scale at both Kazakhdarya and Kyzyl Rovat (Outcome 2). Finally, the land required for the pilot plantings at both Kyzyl Rovat and Kazakhdarya (up to 100 ha in each case) will be made available by the Forestry Department.

2. **The Scientific Centre of Plant Production "Botanika" and the Institute of Microbiology** of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, will jointly implement the research component of the project which comprises the greater part of Outcome 1. Some of the work will be carried out at the two institutes in Tashkent but most of the research activities for the project will be based at the Research Field Station in the Kyzylkum Desert near Churuk. Following their laboratory and glasshouse experimental work, the scientists will be collaborating with the Forestry Department to produce the seedlings for planting out at the two pilot sites in Kyzyl Rovat and Kazakhdarya.

3. **The State Committee for Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and State Cadastre (Goskomzem),** will participate in the project in its function of land use planner and repository for land use information. Goskomzem will work with the project to review land use policies and land use legislation and to develop an integrated land use planning and management system, initially for desert lands. These activities comprise a crucial part of Outcome 3. Through Goskomzem, the project will also gain access to electronic and hardcopy maps of the pilot areas which will serve as the base planning documents.

4. **The communities of Kazakhdarya and Kyzyl Rovat** together with their parent Rayons, namely Muinak Rayon and Romitan Rayon respectively, are the prime beneficiaries of the project and their direct participation will be primarily under Outcome 2. They will be making a contribution in kind to the project in the form of office premises and related facilities for the Field Coordination Office which will be established in each of the two communities. The testing of innovative sand stabilization techniques and sustainable land management will take place in and around the territory of Kazakhdarya and Kyzyl Rovat. The communities will also host the new community governance models will be piloted as a mechanism for managing common community assets. Furthermore, it will be within these two communities that alternative income generation activities will be proposed and facilitated as a means of reducing the stress on land resources. The design of the project and the electronic connectivity (see Output 4.1) will see the two communities as true partners for project implementation in many aspects of the project.

5. **UZGIP under the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources** will participate in the project through its involvement in Outcome 1 and 2 of the project. In partnership with the project team, UZGIP will participate in identification of current and dynamic drivers of social and ecological vulnerability, promote technological improvements for sustainable land management practices, and

develop sustainable and diversified livelihood options for improving the living standards of affected stakeholders within project area, and other relevant actions.

6. **The Uzbek Center for Hydrometeorological Service (Uzhydromet)** will participate in the project through its Hydrometeorological Institute (NIGMI), in view of its responsibilities as Uzbekistan Focal Point for the UN Convention on Climate Change and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. Uzhydromet will provide a climate and desertification oversight for the project. The main contribution of Uzhydromet to the project is expected to be in the policy area under Outcome 3.

7. **The State Committee for Nature Protection (Goskompriroda),** as the Uzbekistan Focal Point for the Convention on Biodiversity, will be involved in providing oversight for the project, particularly in Biodiversity matters. The main contribution of Goskompriroda to the project is expected to be in the policy area under Outcome 3.

8. **The Local Administration and Hakimyats of the Rayons of Muinak Rayon and Romitan in Kazakhdarya and Kyzyl Rovat.** As well as National Government Agencies, and technical departments, and Communities the local administration units, the Rayons, and their Hakimyats are main stakeholders of the project.

3.5 Results expected

- By the end of year 5 the Project will have tested new methodologies of land management on project territory of 500 ha and prepared replication strategies for land rehabilitation on 100,000 ha outside of project area that will be implemented under the CACILM umbrella.
- The number of respiratory complications reported will drop by at least 50%. During inception workshop this is considered of limited value or practicality and is removed.
- By the end of the 5th year at least 10 new plant species / varieties and planting approaches / technologies are tested and transplanted in the region to stabilize sands and stop land degradation in the Bukhara oblast and Karakalpakstan by the Forestry departments.
- By the end of year 5, the survival rates of planted species improved by at least 20% because of the methods and techniques tested within the framework of the project (this new version from Inception report).
- By the end of the Project, at least 20 households (families) use traditional approaches and / or other new sustainable land usage methods.
- Number of days with windblown sand in the project area will be reduced by a estimated 50% within six to ten years of project completion as a result of project intervention (i.e. upon maturing of plantations).
- By the end of year 5, at least 250 ha around the pilot sites at Kyzyl Rovat and Kazakharya have been rehabilitated and used by the communities in a sustainable manner.
- By the end of 5th year, sources of sustainable incomes and employment in the communities will have measurably diversified, increasing by at least 3 new sources of income and 10% more sustainable jobs.
- By the end of the project at least 4 appropriate and sustainable approaches and technologies for reducing fuel wood pressure tested and utilized by local population.
- By the end of year 5, at least 75% more of the questioned respondents from Forestry Department and Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management employees in comparison with the baseline figure in year 1 are knowledgeable about Integrated Land Use Planning and Management

- By the end of the project at least 50% of officials of responsible local and regional organizations will have direct experience of practically applying integrated land use planning. By the end of the project at least 50% of responsible officials will have better capacity to practically implement relevant laws.

By the end of the Project relevant experience is available to CACILM partners and within 5 years post project is replicated in at least 5 other communities beside Kazakhdarya and Kyzyl Rovat.

4. Findings and conclusions

4.1 Project Concept and Design

The Project is designed to address, and is addressing, key environmental and social issue for the country – that of achieving ecosystem stability on heavily degraded land. The importance of negative impacts of land degradation on the environment and rural communities in Uzbekistan was recognized by the government of Uzbekistan, who requested assistance from the Un it developing ways to deal with it. The high level of support for assistance on the issue was emphasised by President of Uzbekistan including discussion on the problems of stabilizing shifting sand in the Aral Sea bed, and desertification issues, during the visit of the UN Secretary General in 2010. UNDP agreed to assist and arranged this through support to the development of a project in Uzbekistan under the newly established, regional, CACILM programme.

The project was then developed utilizing the technical skills of an in-country expert group with UNDP providing regional support, particularly in how to turn the group's ideas into a fundable GEF project.

Although the overall regional CACILM programme had taken a while to develop, and resource, the project in Uzbekistan was the first operational project at a country level to try and implement the programme's approaches. This meant that there was not a wealth of regional experience on the design and development of such projects. This meant that this project has been used rather as a learning vehicle for approaches, rather than being able to draw on the learning of other projects. For this reason there were some limits in the design, which were exacerbated by the project being pushed through relatively quickly.

Much of the information that was used was generic country data rather than data specific to the communities or area, with collection of this more localized data included within the project.

The two main issues that arose during the planning were :-

1. The problem analysis did not fully identify a number of the Root causes of the land degradation, such as the over extraction and utilization of water resources,
2. In the issues that the project did propose tackling it was over-ambitious in what could be achieved – e.g. setting a target of 100,000 hectares to have been rehabilitated outside of the project area within 5 years, or to have introduced Integrated Land Use Planning as a sub-component of the project.

However despite the above mentioned problems the project did propose very constructive ways of testing approaches that should make a significant contribution towards the overall goal, the activities were specific and appropriately planned, and the use of the broad based Steering mechanisms were well designed to bring together a number of previously disparate groups to work together on an issue that required an integrated approach.

4.2 Implementation of Activities

4.2.1 Action Planning – to achieve not just contribute to outcomes

The project team has had to learn a number of new management approaches to fit with UNDP systems, and a number of changes in project staff during the first half did not help this, but the current team has adapted well to the required approaches.

One of the areas that frequently causes project management some difficulties is "Action Planning"; in particular ensuring that the planned activities will deliver the required result, rather than just contribute towards it. For many people new to a project this can be a new skill as many will be used to designing activities that either fit into a broader strategy, or comply with agreed priority areas of work. Both of these require the much easier process of looking at the linkages between the activities and the priorities and being able to justify that they fit, or will contribute. That is very different to the planning process required to identify and plan a set of activities that will deliver the result.

However the project has been improving the quality of its action planning throughout each cycle; in the first year, due to the start date of the project, it was done, rapidly, in March, with the next year's planning starting in December. The management team realize this was not long enough and are now giving themselves 3 months.

There are already many points of good practice in the planning e.g.

- The focus on delivering outcomes not just indicators
- A teamwork approach is taken,
- Round-table discussions with outside specialists are included and have endorsed the actions.
- The process starts with a formal review of progress to date.

However one area that still requires attention is ensuring that the reasoning to show that the actions will deliver the result, not just contribute to it, is recorded. This is weak in the Project Document, and although it has been improved in the Implementation Strategy the team produced to try and ensure that staff and consultants understand, in non technical language, how the project was going to achieve its objectives, this still needs to be strengthened. Many of the consultants questioned did not have aclear picture of the overall project, what it was trying to achieve, and in particular how the components they were dealing with would contribute. There are already a number of tools to assist teams in this in conservation planning, e.g. the Miradi software system developed by the The Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP).

R1 A training course, using real examples, should be arranged for the Project, ideally jointly with other UNDP projects in country, on Results Chains (or similar UNDP endorsed tool)and Results Chains then need to be prepared for each component.

R2 The internally produced Project Implementation Strategy document needs to be updated through participatory planning

R3 The format for planning documents used by the Project team to be edited to include a clear statement of the intended achievement(s) in that period, as included in the Annual Plan of Activities.

4.2.2 Delivery

Overall the MTET was happy that once planned the activities were being carried out to a good standard using appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Due consideration was being given to aspects such as working with the communities, and local government teams, and in using approaches that were appropriate for sustainability after the project .

We do have some comments on some specific activities, and on cross project integration.

Research on Sand stabilization and re-vegetation techniques

It is clear that the project is doing good work on this which is providing useful testing on methods and guidance. The experts selected to head up this area are clearly highly experienced and competent in stand stabilization and re-vegetation, and have been researching this for a number of years. For this reason the project managers need to be sure the an evaluation has been made as to whether it will be more cost effective to use scarce resources to refine small details of methodologies that have been tested in other areas, or to use the guidance of the experts on methods that will work and therefore to be able to scale up the work as soon as possible.

During the project inception process agreement was reached that the originally proposed results on improving human health were beyond the realistic scope of the project, the MTET did feel that as data was being collected on sand movement already it would be a relatively simple addition to collect the additional data on aspects of sand movement that is of particular concern for human health, i.e. the micro-particles, so that data would be available for other work on this, and information could be made available as to whether the stabilization techniques being proposed were making a difference to the risk factors over health.

We have a few minor suggestions to further strengthen this :-

R4 In order to allow a clear demonstration of the cost effectiveness of different approaches there needs to be more data collected on "non-intervention" controls, and on current forestry methods.

R5 In order to better build the understanding of the relationship between the restoration and the pasture management the research should include more on testing the effects of grazing by a greater use of grazing exclosures – ideally in areas where sheep, goats and cattle graze separately to give a better understanding of their relative impacts.

R6 In order to allow better gathering of data on factors that might impact human health the project should collect data on the amount of sand moving at different particle size, and at different heights, and that this testing should run over longer periods so that it captures data on how wind velocity varies, and affects sand movement.

Pasture Management

The project has assembled a highly competent technical team in livestock management, and they have assessed the conditions on the ground and worked closely with Shirkats and communities to identify their priority needs, and have progress in addressing these.

Within this there have been areas of notable success:

- Technical assistance is being provided through the Zoo Veterinary Points (ZVP). At present their priority is working with cattle as these are a higher priority for the Shirkats, who will be in the best position to fund the continuation of the funding to the ZVPs.
- Progress is being made on improvement of cattle breeds and condition, in the anticipation that this will reduce impact on the pasture.
- A detailed technical assessment has been made of the feed needs of livestock in the areas, pasture types, water availability, and guidelines developed as to how these can be grazed in an optimal manner.
- Pasture User Groups have been established which should act as a mechanism to have planned, and co-operative management of the pasture, fodder production and livestock management. This is a significant change from the previous lack of dialogue, planning and co-operative management on this both within the communities, and between the communities and the Shirkats.

The MTET does have a number of comments that should be addressed as soon as possible.

As with other areas of the project a clear strategy needs to be laid out that makes it clear to all as to how the activities will deliver the overall outcome. Although the financial and socio-economic benefits to the communities, and the Shirkats, from the supported move in emphasis from pasture grazing to more intensive livestock management are understood, the benefits this will bring to the condition of the pasture are unclear. In fact it is understood that methodologies have not been developed to monitor pasture condition, nor baselines on condition status established, so that the impacts of different pasture, and livestock, management regimes on the condition of the pasture, not just the livestock, can be identified.

Although the current version of the Pasture Management Plan has good technical information in it, and good guidelines for pasture management, it is not yet a plan. When its guidance is used to develop a management plan this needs to be done in full collaboration with the community, and the Shirkat, ideally through the Pasture Users Group; the current version does seem to be written as if it was “expert driven” rather than user driven.

It should be noted that the team’s assessment did not support the initial assumption, that was important in the original project concept, that over-grazing was a significant factor causing pasture degradation in the project sites.

R7 The project needs to gather more data on current livestock use of the pasture

R8 The project needs to build on its current research on stock condition and growth on pasture, mixed and fodder feeding, to include research on the difference between pasture of different quality.

R 9 The project needs a clear plan in place of how the more intensive livestock breeds will be fed as soon as possible.

R 10 Further progress needs to be made on the Environmental Quality Indicators to be used for pasture condition so that baseline and targets can be included in the Pasture Management Plans

R11 The current guidelines on pasture use need to be used to develop a Management Plan in a fully collaborative process with the Pasture Users Group.

Integrated Land Use Planning

One of the factors that has contributed to environmental degradation in many parts of the world is that different agencies have had responsibilities for different aspects of the management of what is, essentially, one system. This means that even when there is effective planning the potential benefits that could arise from integrated planning are not secured, and more commonly one sector impacts on others, frequently due to nothing more than a lack of awareness.

However Integrated Land Use Planning may be a simple concept, but it is hard to deliver; it is also a relatively new concept here, and will need considerable support if it is to become effective.

The project has been making good progress on this at a local level, e.g. through the Water User Groups, and in the establishment of the Pasture User Groups, and in improved dialogue between the project, the community and the Shirkats.

However this will need to be scaled up if it is to have any impact on the causes of land degradation, or to significantly contribute to rehabilitation. Sometimes projects approach this scaling up by increasing the level at which the project plans e.g. moving from site to landscape, but unless there is a management justification for a project doing, such as in the creation of a Management Plan for a Biosphere Reserve, then it is important that the project strengthens existing, or planned, government processes, so that it is likely to go beyond planning into implementation. We understand that the appropriate level within the current government system for this would be Rayon Development Programmes.

Although resources to support full, participatory and integrated, Rayon Development Programmes may be limited the project wishes to provide step wise assistance to this process. Although the assistance that would be provided would be limited there are advantages in this approach. Sometimes when whole projects are developed to support a model Integrated Land Use Planning Process they sometimes develop processes that are theoretically “model”, but may not be replicable within government resources.

R12 The Project would benefit from external support on ILUP to help design possible scale up to support this at Rayon level

R13 Exploratory discussions should be held as soon as possible at Rayon Level in the 2 target Rayons, to discuss the project providing support for integrated Land Use Planning, ideally as part of their Development Programme. Based on these discussions the project should consider providing support to one of the Rayons as a demonstration of Integrated Land Use Planning, or this output will not be achieved before the end of the project. Collaboration in this may be possible with either the UNDP Landscape Level Planning[3], or the EC supported Area Based Planning processes.

Sustainable Energy Supply

The project has drawn upon the experience and expertise of the Eco-Energy Centre to look at the possibility of testing and demonstrating sustainable energy sources within the project.

A lack of easy, and affordable, energy is a significant issue for the communities in the project area, both for normal domestic use, and for power to pump water areas prone to flooding, and to power irrigation. In addition many of the previous practices, e.g. a high reliance on unsustainable fuelwood collection, were identified as significant contributors to the land degradation. The project is therefore looking at the use of solar, wind, biogas and micro-hydro power, as ways of supplying the energy in a sustainable, and non degrading manner.

As well as there being a need within the country to both test and demonstrate renewable energy, independent energy sources, such as solar, may well assist in improvement of pasture management, because one of the issues they face is that distant wells, which used to have mains electricity, have become non-operable with the double consequence of these areas being under-utilized areas, whilst the remaining areas with operating pumps have become over used. The ability to re-instate pumps in some of these areas would address both with economic and environmental benefits.

UNDP, both globally, and within the region, has excellent experience in the identifying appropriate alternative energy sources, and in their testing and role out; this should allow the project to support the work already being done in country on alternative, renewable, energy.

The project will, of course, need to be sensitive as to future maintenance issues, and which technologies would be truly replicable without a project to provide initial investment.

R14 The short term input arranged for renewable energy expertise should be extended throughout the project, and that it is fully integrated into the planning of other components, not seen as a "stand-alone" component.

GIS

Despite the problems of limited information being digitized, and with limited access to the information that does exist, the project has made good progress in establishing a GIS system to support its activities. From discussion with the GIS specialist, and with technical staff, there is an impression that the GIS system drives the data collection, rather than the people clearly understanding how a GIS can assist with informed decision making, and this leading to the design of a GIS system that meets the needs of the decision makers.

[3] This is a new project proposal developed by UNDP on Land Degradation Focal Area and still subject to funding.

R15 It is recommended that the project conducts further awareness raising on the need for decision makers, inside and outside of the project, to clearly consider the questions that GIS can help them answer

R16 The GIS component needs to be more fully integrated with the rest of the project at the planning stage – both to allow a better understanding of data needs, and data acquisition opportunities.

Raising Awareness and increasing Capacity

The project is making good progress on raising awareness of land degradation issues with a number of key audiences, including the development of materials in local languages. Work is also nearly completed on video which brings home many of the messages. Close liaison with the director of the Environmental Law centre, Armon, as a Member of the Steering Committee has brought in experience of effective methods of communicating with rural communities.

For some materials, both for raising awareness and for disseminating results and guidelines a web-site has clear advantages. The intention under the Project Document, and therefore the approach taken by the project team, has been for people to access project information through the Department of Forestry's website. Although the project has provided some support and training to the Department on this, capacity has remained low, and it is not in a position to provide full technical, and financial, support for running the DoF website. At present the ability of the project to disseminate key information through the website is severely compromised, and is likely to remain so which the project website operates through the DoF site.

As the project has been established to operate as one learning project within a regional network of projects looking at Land Degradation issues it is likely that there will be many potential users trying to access information through searches on Land Degradation rather than Forestry, and links from the project site to other dealing with the same issues would be helpful to many users. As the regional network of Land Degradation projects (CACILM) has a good, and operational, website, it is therefore suggested that the Project website should be developed with the CACILM website rather than through the Department of Forestry.

R17 The project should consider the use of regular local radio broadcasts on issues around land degradation, sustainable land / pasture use, food production and local livelihoods as part of their awareness strategy.

R18 The project should discuss with CACILM the possibility of establishing a project website as part of the CACILM website

The project has made good progress in building the capacity of a number of stakeholder groups.

- The capacity of the Project team themselves have been developed in aspects of project planning and management.
- The team have built the understanding of land degradation, restoration and sustainable management issues with a number of central government staff, both those involved with technical and governance components of the project.

- The project has increased the understanding and technical skills of government staff at a local level.
- The project has made good strides in increasing the capacity of communities in aspects such as livestock health and food production in the harsh, arid and salty, conditions within the project, and of local government staff to be able to continue and replicate this work.
- The project has also started to support communities, and identified key individuals within those communities, to develop business skills will be essential to take the communities beyond subsistence.
- Through the establishment of, and support to, water user groups the project has built the capacity of the communities to jointly plan and implement co-operative activities where individual action would not be effective.

The MTET did note that at present the emphasis on the capacity building is on the "input" side i.e. what training is it thought should be given, or has been requested, and then the delivery of this training. If possible the project should concentrate a little more on the "outcomes" side of the capacity building – both in planning – e.g. a functional analysis to identify required competencies, an analysis of current competency to identify gaps, and a way of monitoring the increase in competencies, not in the delivery of training. This is clearly an area where UNDP has considerable global expertise, and it is understood that a specialist is being brought in from UNDP New York to provide assistance in this.

R19 The project should build on its good start on capacity building by putting the emphasis on the results of the development, rather than the delivery of development, through the use of competency standards, in identifying requirements, current capacity, and monitoring the improvement in capacity.

4.3.3 Budgeting and Financial Management

It would appear that the project is fully compliant with UNDP financial management procedures.

Initially planning the costs of activities was not very accurate. This was a combination of factors – working in new areas, the impact of weather conditions, and understanding UNDP procurement which means that items and activities may cost a different amount to how they have been bought in other projects.

Initially financial planning was based more on the allocation of the resources available in the budget, but the project has been improving its approach and capacity to carry out costed activity planning.

This is improving year-on-year and the UNDP CO colleagues have made it clear they are happy to spend longer working time with the project staff to further develop financial planning skills of the project team.

Overall actual expenditure is in-line with approved expenditure for the year.

However some significant changes from the budget in the Project Document have been requested and approved, as specified below.

The main changes are :-

- Management costs have gone up considerably due to increased UNDP rates. Based on the survey results conducted during February-March 2009 the Remuneration scale of UNDP CO Uzbekistan for Service Contract holders has increased by 30% in comparison with Y2008. In addition from 1 May 2009, all SCs are receiving an additional 8,33% of the base monthly remuneration in lieu of pension (approved by the UNDP HQ).

- The additional management costs have been primarily covered by delivering activities at a lower cost than originally budgeted; this has primarily been delivered by moving from institutional sub-contracts to contracts with technical specialists. In many cases the individual contracts have been with the Heads / Director of Institutions so that the strategy has not meant a loss of institutional links. Other savings have been made by reducing non-essential, and non-technical staff, e.g. guards.

The Project Management Team have expressed the opinion, which is supported by the MTET, that the original intention of having this as a 5 year project was more appropriate than the current 4 years, which was always unrealistic for a project that needed to first of all test approaches that were not only seasonal (e.g. planting seasons), but would take a number of years to show useful results, and to then promote and support their replication. The MTET therefore recommends that the project is granted a no-cost extension. Due to both the amount of work to be done, both to replicate approaches, and deliver on areas only just started, e.g. Rayon planning, and the seasonality of much of the field work, and the directly linked seasonality of the farming cycles the project needs to work with, an additional full year would make most sense. This would also tie in with UNDP, project and government work-planning and budget cycles.

Clearly an extra year “no-cost” (i.e. no extra budget) extension would clearly put additional pressure on the management costs as funds would have to found within the budget to pay for the extra year of management.

One way in which the project structure and budget could be adjusted to assist with this would be for the functions, and deliverables, from Component 4, to be transferred to their relevant places in Components 1-3. In fact the MTET was unclear as to why the monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptive management had been pulled away from the main components in this way – they are all aspects of good practice essential for Components 1-3. If they are integrated under the management and performance of the main activities then some of the funding could be used to extend the management - most of component 4 costs are management. In addition further costs could be made on some of the non-essential staff, e.g. cleaners & guards, with only essential staff kept on into Year 5.

The Project team are confident that an extra year could be delivered within the existing budget, and have prepared the following table to propose a revised budget over 5 years.

GEF Outcome/Atlas Activity	Responsible Partv/ Implementing Agent	Fund ID	Donor Name	Atlas Budgetary Account Code	ATLAS Budget Description	Amount Year 1 (USD)	Amount Year 2 (USD)	Amount Year 3 (USD)	Amount Year 4 (USD)	Amount Year 5 (USD)	Total (USD)
OUTCOME 1: Plant species, having both strong ecological and economic benefits for succession in desert and semi-desert ecosystems identified and sustainable land management methods tested	UNDP	62000	GEF	71200	International Consultants	7500	7500	7500	0		22500
				71300	Local Consultants	2500	16500	7500	1000		27500
				71600	Travel	500	3750	1000	750		6000
				72100	Contractual services	500	1500	1500	500		4000
				72200	Equip	10000	10000	4000	0		24000
				72300	Materials& Goods	3000	5000	4500	500		13000
				72600	Grants	2000	10000	10000	0		22000
				74200	Audio Visual& Print Prod	5000	5000	5000	5000		20000
				74500	Miscellaneous	250	250	250	250		1000
					sub-total GEF	**31250**	**59500**	**41250**	**8000**		**140000**
		04000	UNDP	72200	Equip	5950	0	0	0		5950
				74500	Miscellaneous	50	0	0	0		50
					sub-total donor UNDP	**6000**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**6000**
		Project document			**Total Outcome 1**	**37 250**	**59 500**	**41 250**	**8 000**		
	Actual expenditure (2008- 2010)					**41 464.98**	**41 406.12**	**30 429.03**	**8 000**	**19 699,87**	**141 000.00**
OUTCOME 2: Mobile sands stabilized and degraded land rehabilitated in partnership with desert communities	UNDP	62000	GEF	71200	International Consultants	10000	10000	10000	0		30000
				71300	Local Consultants	5000	20000	15000	5000		45000
				71600	Travel	5000	15000	15000	5000		40000
				72100	Contractual services	3000	12000	12000	3000		30000
				72200	Equip	5000	15000	20000	0		40000
				72300	Materials& Goods	5000	15000	11000	1600		32600
				72400	Audio Visual& Print Prod	10000	10000	10000	10000		40000

				72600	Grants	3000	12000	10000	5000		30000
				74500	Miscellaneous	300	500	600	200		1600
					sub-total GEF	**46300**	**109500**	**103600**	**29800**		**289200**
		04000	UNDP	72200	Office equip	5950	0	0	0		5950
				74500	Miscellaneous	50	0	0	0		50
					sub-total donor UNDP	**6000**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**6000**
		Project document			**Total Outcome 2**	**52 300**	**109 500,00**	**103 600,00**	**29 800,00**		
	Actual expenditure (2008- 2010)					**9 580.37**	**68 277.17**	**70 440.75**	**29 800**	**40 000**	***218 098.29***
OUTCOME 3: Institutional and policy framework for integrated land use planning and management, strengthened	UNDP	62000	GEF	71200	International Consultants	5000	15000	20000	0		40000
				71300	Local Consultants	2000	8000	8000	2000		20000
				71600	Travel	1000	4000	4000	1000		10000
				72100	Contractual services	1500	1500	1500	1500		6000
				72200	Equip	10000	15000	15000	0		40000
				72800	Information technology equipment	1000	3000	4000	0		8000
				72400	Audio Visual& Print Prod	0	4000	4000	0		8000
				74500	Miscellaneous	500	1000	1000	500		3000
					sub-total GEF	**21000**	**51500**	**57500**	**5000**		**135000**
		04000	UNDP	72500	Supplies	5950	0	0	0		5950
				74500	Miscellaneous	50	0	0	0		50
					sub-total donor UNDP	**6000**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**6000**
		Project document			**Total Outcome 3**	**27 000,00**	**51 500,00**	**57 500,00**	**5 000,00**		
	Actual expenditure (2008- 2010)					**16 343.20**	**38 153.12**	**41 443.88**	**5 000**	**50 059.80**	***142 000***
OUTCOME 4: Monitoring and evaluation, learning and adaptive	UNDP	62000	GEF	71200	International Consultants	14400	30000	14400	40000		98800
				71300	Local Consultants	5000	25000	25000	5000		60000
				71600	Travel	10000	10000	10000	10000		40000
				72100	Contractual services	4000	12000	12000	4000		32000

management, implemented				72200	Equip	3000	4500	4500	0		12000
				72400	Audio Visual& Print Prod	2000	10000	12000	0		24000
				74100	Professional services	4000	4000	4000	4000		16000
				74500	Miscellaneous	1500	2500	2000	2000		8000
					sub-total GEF	**43900**	**98000**	**83900**	**65000**		**290800**
		04000	UNDP	71300	Local Consultants	3000	7000	7000	3000		20000
				71600	Travel	2000	8000	8000	2000		20000
				72100	Contractual services	1000	5000	3000	3000		12000
				72200	Equip	2000	8000	10000	0		20000
				72400	Audio Visual& Print Prod	1000	3000	3000	1000		8000
				74500	Miscellaneous	200	800	800	200		2000
					sub-total donor UNDP	**9200**	**31800**	**31800**	**9200**		**82000**
		Project document			**Total Outcome 4**	**53 100**	**129 800**	**11 5700**	**74 200**		
	Actual expenditure (2008- 2010)					**34 443.80**	**39 646.25**	**86 485**	**74 200**	**60 000**	***294 775.05***
OUTCOME 5: Project management budget/cost	UNDP	62000	GEF	71400	Contractual services-Individual	23160	23160	23160	23160		92640
				74500	Miscellaneous	300	880	880	300		2360
		04000	UNDP		**sub-total GEF**	**23460**	**24040**	**24040**	**23460**		**95000**
				72200	Equipment and Furniture	20000	0	0	0		20000
				72500	Supplies	1250	1250	1250	1250		5000
				71600	Travel	5000	22000	22000	5000		54000
				72400	Communic& Audio Visual Equip	2000	2000	2000	2000		8000
				73100	Rental& Maintenance-	2500	2500	2500	2500		10000
				74500	Miscellaneous	500	1000	1000	500		3000
					sub-total donor UNDP	**31250**	**28750**	**28750**	**11250**		**100000**

		Project document		**Total Management**	**54 710**	**52 790**	**52 790**	**34 710**		
	Actual expenditure (2008- 2010)				**70 881.79**	**84 953.63**	**97 790**	**34 710**	**57 150,13**	***345 485.55***
Unspent funds from PPG				**GEF**	**358.89**					
PROJECT TOTAL					**224718.89**	**403090**	**370840**	**151710**	**226 910,97**	**1150358,89**
Real expenditure of funds					**172712,97**	**272436,29**	**326588,66**	**151710**	**226910,97 Saved funds**	**1150358,89 Remains the same**
Saved funds					**52005,92**	**130653,71**	**44251,34**			

The saved total budget's funds at present time consist **USD 226 910,97,**
From which **USD 183 951,6** are from Outcome 4 (Monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptive management implemented).

Cash Flow

It is clear that any organization, and the projects it funds, will need to have robust financial systems in place. When that organization is a global organization there will be many advantages in the system being standardized rather than having to develop, and contend with, multiple systems, each customized for a certain set of circumstances. It is also clear that such a system must have strong safeguards built in against possible mis-use. All members of the Project team understand, and are supportive of this. However such robust systems can cause considerable difficulties in some areas; where there are not established businesses that could tender, and where businesses and individuals do not have bank accounts, but in areas that outside businesses would find too expensive to operate in, where such things as receipts do not exist, or where there is such a shortage of certain goods that it is only possible to purchase them with cash – and there are more than enough cash buyers happy to buy all of the commodity on offer.

In such circumstances it is necessary for the Country Office to provide advice and guidance as to how the problems can be got around, in a way that is acceptable under UNDP procedures, but that allows the work to be done. Such problems are not unique to rural Uzbekistan, but occur in many remote areas where UNDP operates, so UNDP as an organization has the experience of how to find the balance.

This has to date been an issue with the project, and has made field work un-necessarily difficult at times. Discussions with the project and UNDP CO, have led to 2 possible solutions:

- The use of SSAs in which the contract specifies not only time, but also the provision of the materials required for the service
- The use of 2 witness statements instead of receipts in agreed circumstances

The Project Management, and the CO need to meet to get the exact mechanisms, and limits, of these agreed and written.

R20 The project, with the support of UNDP where appropriate, should systematically follow up discussions with all the institutions listed as providing co-financing into implementation of the project, and where required develop the proposals indicated in the ProDoc.

R21 The approved Project Budget included both GEF and UNDP TRAC funding. The project team have a clear understanding of allocation and use of the GEF component, but are unsure of the TRAC funding. Clarification is therefore required as to the amount of UNDP TRAC funding that has been used, and what is still available

R22 UNDP Country Office to finalize decision on whether additional funding might be available for the gas supply in Kazak Darya as per the negotiations with Uztransgas; and for the CO to formally reply on this to the company.

R 23 Although it may be possible to bring in additional financial contributions, (e.g. through the UNDP / CACILM Capacity Building Budget) the project needs to draft a budget as to how it would need to re-structure finances to cover the additional management costs for an additional year.

R24 The PMT, and UNDP CO need to meet to discuss and agree mechanisms such as the further use of SSA to provide materials and services, and the use of witness statements, to ensure that cash flow to the field neither compromises required activities – nor contravenes UNDP systems.

Strategy- Promoting "Replication" or "Scaling up" ?

The objective of the project goes beyond just testing new methods – it includes their promotion. For this to be effective means that as well as the usual requirements of a project to find approaches that are replicable and sustainable it has to proactively lay the right foundations so that the recommendations it makes are likely to be replicated. This underpins many of the comments below.

The issues the project is dealing with are extremely serious – and taking place at an extremely large scale – there are up to 4 million hectares that may need to be vegetated for stabilization. The Department of Forestry in Karakalpakstan pointed out that even if the project helps them find more efficient methods of stabilization and re-vegetation and they can increase their current rate from 8,000 hectares a year to 100,000 hectares a year the task would still take 40 years – and that does not include any additional work required away from the old sea bottom as a result of the spread of the degradation.

The contribution of the project to identifying, and testing, better methods is well recognized by all, but going from 8,000 to 100,000 hectares a year is unlikely to be achieved by just improving the efficiency of the current low cost approaches – and even then 40 years is too long.

It is therefore suggested that the project is in an excellent position to build on its current work in 2 different ways:-

1. Gathering information that is going to allow the project, and others, to be able to persuade both the government, and international development partners, that more resources are required to tackle this, so it can be scaled up, not just replicated, and that doing so would be a wise investment.

   At present it is hard to do that because the project is only focusing on how to halt, or reverse, the degradation, and therefore is only looking at the costs of the work, not the costs to the country of not doing it, or the value of the benefits the projects activities could bring.

   It is suggested that to do this the project needs to be used as a learning site for the country, and region, on how environmental economics fits into traditional economics. If information can be gathered on the costs, not only to the environment and the communities, of the land degradation, for example how much is the value of agricultural production decreased by the increased salinity, blocked water courses, and reduction of useable land, or how much the public health impacts may cost, both to treat people and in lost production, then it is going to be possible to show the cost / benefit analysis of different investment scenarios.

   There was a strong consensus amongst those consulted by the MTET that taking this approach would add considerable value to the project – and of course the case for extending its work.

It is understood that it would take some time to gather all the information if you had to start from nothing, but there is data already available on some key elements, e.g. cotton production at different salinities, or the likely human health impacts of different levels of particles in the air. Even if models are put together with limited data, and subsequently up-graded, with new elements brought in as data becomes available, it is likely to both immediately add weight to the argument – and get decision makers to start to think about environmental issues in a different way.

This stronger information on the economic, social and environmental implications of different development scenarios would also allow future consideration of possible options with either a Law on Degraded Land, or a new section under the existing Land Law considering such issues as the rights of people in such areas, additional support, changed norms for production, and incentives to support sustainable practices.

2. The project has, to-date, focussed on techniques that are labour intensive and low cost. These are proving effective and will be appropriate for replication in partnership with Forestry Department and communities. However the project should also prepare for the possibility of significant "scaling up", not just replication, and this may require additional desk research, designing and testing of other techniques appropriate for dealing with larger areas – e.g. chemical, mechanical or aerial.

R25 The project needs to formalize its replication / scaling-up / promotional strategy for each component as soon as is possible as this will affect what it does, how and with whom.

R26 The project should ensure that its analysis of techniques allows it to report the cost-effectiveness, not just effectiveness of the different techniques of sand stabilization and re-vegetation.

R27 In partnership with other involved groups a Working Group should be set up to design a forward strategy on developing understanding of the economics of land degradation, and rehabilitation, including :-

1) A capacity development programme, in partnership with CACILM and UNDP on the economic analysis of land degradation, including scenario modelling, using one, or both of the existing project sites as the learning example.

2) The development of a concept for expanding the economic analysis and scenario planningto demonstrate the importance to the economy of the country to tackling the land degradation – i.e. moving from it being seen as an ecological problem that needs money spent on it, to being seen as an economic and social problem that can have cost effective environmental solutions.

The Project is intended to contribute to the goal of achieving ecosystem stability on degraded lands in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum Desert by testing, evaluating and promoting innovative solutions to the problems of land degradation.

Project has one objective which contributes to one goal.

After analysing the background conditions, problems and their underlying causes the project design process came up with an integrated approach to achieving this objective through delivering 3 operational outcomes.

Each of these outcomes are intended to be achieved through delivering a number of outputs.

The outputs are delivered through a series of Activities – which the team further breaks down into specific Actions it carries out.

It is assumed that by having technical teams carrying out the actions and activities, and delivering the outputs that this will deliver the outputs, and that they will deliver the outcomes, and that they in turn will deliver the objectives.

The "logic" of how each one delivers the one above is carefully considered during project development, and planning, but this is often not well recorded. The project took a step forward in this in preparing a Project Implementation Strategy, but this needs further development.

Over the last year the Project has made good progress in developing the project wide planning that is needed to ensure integration of effort in the different components to deliver a combined objective, but there is still more to do to carry this down to the teams at field level where people currently have a narrower understanding, and see their individual component as the goal, rather than understanding its purpose is in its contribution to the overall objective. From discussions with consultants one of the issues raised as to why people did not always understand, or feel a part of the overall picture was that they were taken on for short term contracts, which might, or might not, be renewed. Without any indication as to whether they would be involved in the project beyond being paid to deliver a few short term tasks it is not surprising that they were not giving the time or interest to become fully engaged in the project.

Although there are good examples of where the linkage between the component and the objective work well, e.g. in the way that household gas connections should reduce fuel-wood collection, there may be a difference in focus in the work of, for instance, with the ZVPs, depending on whether they see improving livelihoods through improved livestock quality is the goal, or if this is being done to lead to a reduction in unsustainable pasture management. Similarly the types of alternative livelihoods that will be supported will be different depending on the overall purpose of this.

R28 The project needs to continue cross-component planning and management meetings, and active participations of experts from one component team into the activities of other groups.

R29 Although the reasons for starting new experts on short-term SSAs are understood, the project should move tried and tested people to longer term contract, even if these are longer term SSA,to ensure that understanding of, and commitment to, the overall project, rather than shorter term tasks is strengthened.

R30 Increased discussion at field levels on the overall purpose and strategy

R 31 Include a section in the action planning document that includes not only how the planned activity will deliver the outcomes for that component but contribute towards the overall objective

4.3 Changes in development conditions

Outcome 1 Plant species, having both strong ecological and economic benefits for succession in desert and semi-desert ecosystems identified and conservation agriculture methods tested.

1. Testing of methods to stabilize sands and enrich arid pastures initiated on 25 hectares of land in project sites using 24 new plant species (including 10 species for sand stabilization, 8 salt-tolerant species and 6 species for pasture enrichment) and five new methods of physical barriers.
2. Two plant nurseries established in collaboration with local private farmer in Kazakh Darya (2.5 hectares) to provide plant stabilization and pasture enrichment / fodder plants and trees for local planting
3. Training of over 146 specialists and local partners from both sites on methods and technologies for forestry development (planting, seed production, nursery development)

Outcome 2 Mobile sands stabilized and degraded land rehabilitated in partnership with desert communities.

1. Livestock Management Committees established, pasture user plans collaboratively developed and agreed at both project sites.
2. Sustainable self supporting Livestock zoo-technical centers established at both sites and actions to improve livestock quality carried out (insemination of 131 cattle and 1700 Karakul sheep). 8 breed sheep procured in order to improve livestock breeding quality.
3. Basis for sustainable household horticulture re-established (water pumps / infrastructure, Water User Groups legally established, horticultural training carried out, tree seeding provided).
4. Number of capacity building training sessions conducted for local communities and specialists from project stakeholders to stabilize mobile sands in degraded areas, to manage and rehabilitate pasture lands and to manage livestock in sustainable manner;
5. Capacity of local community entrepreneurs has been built to develop alternative income sources through trainings (2) and 4 local entrepreneurs supported (development of 8 business plans).

Outcome 3 Institutional and policy framework for integrated land use planning and management, strengthened.

1. Analysis conducted and baseline report prepared using survey data gathered from survey of local community members, as well as from specialists of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Main Forestry Department related to land resources management and usage. As a result a strong need to prepare and carry out study programs on capacity building and knowledge improvement on SLM issues revealed.
2. Capacity Development Programme and Action Plan prepared and agreed by project counterpart agencies.

3. A Concept Note on Integrated land use planning and management has been developed and presented to the Main Forestry Department of Karakalpakstan and discussed in the workshop of "Legal and Institutional Baselines of Sustainable Land Use Planning" conducted in July.
4. GIS data base established and capacity of implementing agency specialists being trained on use of GIS software and databases (4 specialists from National Forestry Agency)
5. Drafts of key revisions needed to legislation prepared (amendments to Land Code, Law on Private Farmers).

Outcome 4 Monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptive management implemented.

1. three (3) Project Steering Committee meetings held (two in Tashkent in 2009 and one in Bukhara in June 2010) in which project progress was presented, plans were approved and stakeholders provided input and commitment towards agreed activities.
2. Project shared experience and contributed to discussion and outcomes of CACILM Regional Meeting in Tashkent October 2009.
3. Project site visit to Kyzyl Rovat in Bukhara region was organized for members of Project Steering Committee (June 2010).
4. Mid Term Evaluation of the project.
5. Field monitoring visits and project office visits were carried out twice a year by programming staff of UNDP CO in 2009 and in 2010.

4.4 Sustainability

The project has established excellent working relations with the Department of Forestry at both national and project levels, and the Department firmly indicated that they would be directly using the key methods recommended by the project, in particular over re-vegetation and sand stabilization. The Department also confirmed that adequate budgets were in place to both sustain and replicate the activities into a broader area. The project should be congratulated on this.

However as already indicated earlier the MTET was concerned as to whether sustaining and replicating these methods – which were partly selected as low cost methods so they could be sustained – would be adequate to achieve the overall objectives as a major contribution to the goal – or whether the project needed to "scale-up", rather than just replicate.

4.5 Project's Adaptive Management Framework

Monitoring Systems

Project management puts considerable effort into monitoring. This includes a major focus on monitoring activities, with a requirement for trip reports after every visit to the field, together with regular technical reports on the research / testing components of the activities. These are then backed up by overall component reports which include considering progress towards the indicators so to inform the required progress reporting.

Monitoring quality

Monitoring that activities are performed is now well established in most organizations and almost all projects; most technical staff and managers are now increasingly familiar with focussing on "results based management", in planning and reporting. The new UNDP/GEF Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs) now go a stage further by asking projects to also consider the "Quality" of delivery, rather than just whether it was done. This move is very constructive and is likely to lead to a significant improvement in the long term effectiveness of projects, and in their legacy in capacity building.
However such significant refinements in approach will always take some time to become fully understood and effective, as both project, and even Country Offices, learn to use the method to maximum benefit.

It is clear that with support from the Country Office the project team is making a serious effort to both comply with the new reporting requirements, and to benefit from them at the same time. However, as already indicated, such changes require time, and continued support.

At present it appears from the QPRs that not all team members fully understand the difference between indicators for quality and for delivery. Better progress on this has been made on the managerial, rather than technical components of the project, where a number of the Quality Indicators still focus more on whether things have been done, rather than the quality.

However it is clear that this area is both a new skill, and one that is being developed as the project progresses.

Risk Management

The project management team has worked according to the Project Document – however risk identification and management is not a major feature in the Project Document. Section 4 of the project Summary on "Key indicators, assumptions and risks" does not mention any risks and the references in the logical framework seem to be more of a post design summary of risks, and how the approach of the project, e.g. its participatory approach with communities, will have minimized the risks. There does not seem to be a strong indication that once risks had been identified that minimizing, and monitoring, those risks was fed back into project design. This means that although key risks were identified a number of them that could have had specific strategies for their management (e.g. attitude of Cabinet of Ministers), were not included in the design, or the activities. This narrow focus on internal risks, rather than external risks, which is common in projects, causes a narrow focus which can mean that a project may deliver on its results, but the higher level achievement of its objectives, and its ability to significantly contribute towards the goal can be compromised.

The project reviewed "Risks" during the Inception Workshop, and discussed them as part of the standard agenda in Steering Committee Meetings. In the Inception Workshop it was identified that there was a potential risk that "Central Government does not acknowledge importance and priority of SLM". However the meeting concluded that this was only a theoretical, not an "actual" risk as the government has already approved the CACILM project. The MTET believes that this alone does not manage the risk. Although approving CACILM indicates the government recognizes this as an issue, but does not necessarily indicate it is given appropriate priority – there is a significant difference between approving a project, especially if that means funds will be awarded, and giving the issue priority when it comes to government budget allocation, or the need to change practices (e.g. agricultural practices). There are also comments in the risk matrix discussing the awareness of "responsible parties" – a significant issue here is that departments directly involved in the project may be aware of the issue but other departments, which may be more influential over key decisions, may be less aware, and do not see it as requiring changed practices. For these reasons the MTET has

made recommendations aimed at addressing the issue that others agencies in central (and local) government, need the arguments made in a different (economic) way if it is to get the required priority in national decision making.

R 32 The project should review the Risks and Assumptions in the Project document, refine these where required, and then develop a strategy and plan for how it will manage and monitor these risks.

Work Planning

The log-frame is clearly used by the project in planning its activities. Work planning is results driven, and adaptive management at an activity level is being incorporated into their revised action planning, which now starts off with an analysis of results from the previous round of activities in that component to help inform the planning. Although there is consideration given to the Indicator the process seems to be result, rather than indicator, driven.

However as already indicated there are some limitations in the way that it is used.

As already indicated the main issue is that at present there is too much separation between components, so choices of options within the activities (e.g. what businesses to support, or how to encourage more efficient livestock production), are driven by one section of the without taking account of how that fits in with components.

To date there has been less use of results against objectives to consider whether the project logic works in the way that successful achievement of the outcomes will achieve the objectives.

Reporting

Reporting requirements to UNDP, GEF and Government are being met. There has already been a demonstrable improvement in quality of reports - e.g. in the development of a new format that makes it clearer how this contributes to the required outcome.

With continued collaboration and support from UNDP will be continued improvement e.g. over the purpose and use of the "Quality" reports.

At present the number of reports is excessive – the project Manager has to deal with about 1 a day incoming and one a week outgoing. It is hoped that the Technical Co-ordinator will be able to take over much of this regarding the incoming reports from teams and consultants, and allow them to focus on reports to UNDP, GEF and government. However the lack of standardization of reporting requirements between UNDP and government, both over format and timing, meets that there is an opportunity for improved efficiency here – and the MTET feels that having the same format going to UNDP and government improves transparency.

The main changes that have been made to project plans from what was in the Project Document were through an inception workshop that reviewed the project document, checked its content based on up-dated information, and proposed a revised Implementation Strategy that included a number of suggested changes to the results and indicators. This workshop was quite thorough in reviewing the project design, and stayed within the bounds of what can be changed but did request a number of changes.

Members of the Steering Committee, and UNDP, were part of the Workshop so were aware of the reasoning for the changes and the UNDP Country and Regional Offices were supportive and approved the requested changes.

Other changes have been at a lower level and have been covered in the normal reporting and work-planning processes.

Overall the project seems to have been cost effective. In particular the way it has moved from institutional sub-contracts to individual SSAs has allowed it to deliver the activities at significantly below budget – which was important as the management cost, at agreed UNDP rates, have increased significantly since the Project Document was prepared.

R 33 Now that the National Technical Co-ordinator position is working it should free up the PM from having to deal with all the technical reports which would free her up to further develop and implement the project strategy, including strategic partnerships required to ensure sustainability of the project's achievements.

R 34 UNDP to discuss with government the consolidation of reports – agreed structure and timing so that all sides can be kept fully informed – but in a more efficient way.

R 35 Continued support is required by the Country Office and Project Management to help all team members fully understand the benefits of performance management, including the focus on "quality", and to develop the tools and techniques to fully implement it.

Underlying Factors

As indicated in the section on "risks" project planning could have been stronger in preparing management, and monitoring, strategies for the underlying factors that are outside the project's direct control – as they are not always outside of the projects potential influence.

The suggested strategy for economic analysis of different land management scenarios proposed above is intended to raise the commitment of decision makers to the objectives of the project in a way that addresses the key underlying factors (lack of awareness, prioritization, and resources) tht could negatively impact the ability of the project to achieve its objectives.

4.5 Partnership Strategy

Partner	Overview of the relationship
Forestry	Excellent. Forestry department responsible for forestry lands and difficult to get support from them if project team working with other ministries or agencies
Economic	Good. Better develop more close partnership with them in the next stages of project activities
Agriculture	Medium. Will be more efficient and better condition for replication

	and sustainability if project team worked closely with relevant departments of Ministry of agriculture and water resources
Goskomzemgeodezcadastr	Good. In 2009 the project has hired an SSA expert on Sustainable Land Management, who is Chief of the Department of Goskomzemgeodezcadastr. The Outputs of his ToR were the following: 1. Projects proposals on legal and institutional reforms for improvement of land use and planning, drafts of the legal materials has been prepared; 2. Working meeting with relevant partners on discussion of recommendations and final report on recommendations is submitted; 3. The detailed plan on recommendations implementation has been submitted.
NGOs	Association of NGOs are part of the Steering Group, and has conducted a number of activities to specifically engage with civil society: - 29.06-02.07.2009 the project assisted in organizing a 3 days Media tour for ecological journalists and NGOs, initiated by the NGO Fund ECOSAN (18 persons) to project sites in Karakalpakstan. 21.07.09 on the premises of Leskhoz (Implementing agency) the project has organized the round table for ecological NGOs (12). Project described the results and main achievements and discussed the possible ways of cooperation with NGO . For example, we are planning cooperation with NGO Association of business women of Uzbekistan on business plans realization (needlework and production of national ornaments) for Kazakhdarya and Kizil Rovat women (they will assist on teaching, marketing and extension services). There is very limited number of accredited ecological NGOs in Uzbekistan with small credentials, but we are trying to cooperate in some way with them.
Research Institutions	The project moved from institutional sub-contracts to these institutions to individual contracts with senior staff from the institutions. Because the staff is sufficiently senior they have been able to ensure broader institutional links.
Private Sector	Project team closely worked with State natural gas supply company Uztransgas and they renewed gas pipe to Kazakdarya. This good partnership and there is the potential to explore links for collaboration where existing, or planned, operations may be at risk from shifting sands
Other	Many institutions specifically included in the Project Document have not been mentioned on the visit

Vocational college	An out-posted branch of Agricultural vocational college is being established in Kazakdarya – this would seem to present an opportunity for engagement with a group that could sustain some of the community support

4.6 Community engagement

The project team all fully understand the importance of effective community engagement, and have made a good start on a process which always takes time. The early stages of the project included considerable time in the community as the baseline socio-economic conditions were assessed, and needs identified. Engagement then tailed off a little as the project went through its own planning and testing, as it was felt they needed to have answers on offer. The project is now ready to start increasing the community engagement again.

It is therefore believed that the following recommendations simply reflect the way the project would be taking this anyway.

R 36 Community participation in decision making operates in two ways – informal suggestions to project staff, e.g. during workshops, and more formal discussion with CommunityLeaders. Over the course of the project efforts should be made to more formally engage with more of the community, i.e. not just leaders, ideally through participatory planning processes.

R 37 The project should establish Community based "Advisory" Groups at each pilot site to provide support to project planning processes

R 38 In collaboration with UNDP & FFI follow up initial contacts made with Oil & Gas operators to look at collaborative research on sand stabilization and re-vegetation

R 39There would seem to be some as yet unused opportunities for inclusion of the community in monitoring – data may not always to as accurate but gives an invaluable forum for engagement on what the project is trying to do

R 40 To facilitate community engagement the project should more selectively recruit specialists from the local area, which can be specified in the Terms Of Reference

R41 A proposal should be made by the Steering Committee to UNDP for extension of the project from 4 years to 5 years to allow it to not only develop, test and demonstrate techniques in the project area but for active promotion in the broader impacted areas of the country.

4.7 UNDP Contribution

UNDP has provided good support to the project from both the Country and Regional Offices.

Once the initial request for support was made by the government UNDP provided both funding and technical assistance in project preparation, and in seeking and securing funding for the project.

UNDP has shown considerable flexibility in supporting the changes that were identified at Inception, and in Adaptive Management as the project has proceeded.

As the project management team has had to learn a range of new management techniques the CO has provided advice and guidance, and helped identify ways to solve issues as they have arisen.

5 Summary of Recommendations

R1 A training course, using real examples, should be arranged for the Project, ideally jointly with other UNDP projects in country, on Results Chains (or similar UNDP endorsed tool)and Results Chains then need to be prepared for each component.

R2 The internally produced Project Implementation Strategy document needs to be updated through participatory planning

R3 The format for planning documents used by the Project team to be edited to include a clear statement of the intended achievement(s) in that period, as included in the Annual Plan of Activities.

R4 In order to allow a clear demonstration of the cost effectiveness of different approaches there needs to be more data collected on "non-intervention" controls, and on current forestry methods.

R5 In order to better build the understanding of the relationship between the restoration and the pasture management the research should include more on testing the effects of grazing by a greater use of grazing exclosures – ideally in areas where sheep, goats and cattle graze separately to give a better understanding of their relative impacts.

R6 In order to allow better gathering of data on factors that might impact human health the project should collect data on the amount of sand moving at different particle size, and at different heights, and that this testing should run over longer periods so that it captures data on how wind velocity varies, and affects sand movement.

R7 The project needs to gather more data on current livestock use of the pasture

R8 The project needs to build on its current research on stock condition and growth on pasture, mixed and fodder feeding, to include research on the difference between pasture of different quality.

R 9 The project needs a clear plan in place of how the more intensive livestock breeds will be fed as soon as possible.

R 10 Further progress needs to be made on the Environmental Quality Indicators to be used for pasture condition so that baseline and targets can be included in the Pasture Management Plans

R11 The current guidelines on pasture use need to be used to develop a Management Plan in a fully collaborative process with the Pasture Users Group.

R12 The Project would benefit from external support on ILUP to help design possible scale up to support this at Rayon level

R13 Exploratory discussions should be held as soon as possible at Rayon Level in the 2 target Rayons, to discuss the project providing support for integrated Land Use Planning, ideally as part of their Development Programme. Based on these discussions the project should consider providing support to one of the Rayons as a demonstration of Integrated Land Use Planning, or this output will not be achieved before the end of the project. Collaboration in this may be possible with either the UNDP Landscape Level Planning[4], or the EC supported Area Based Planning processes.

R14 The short term input arranged for renewable energy expertise should be extended throughout the project, and that it is fully integrated into the planning of other components, not seen as a "stand-alone" component.

R15 It is recommended that the project conducts further awareness raising on the need for decision makers, inside and outside of the project, to clearly consider the questions that GIS can help them answer

R16 The GIS component needs to be more fully integrated with the rest of the project at the planning stage – both to allow a better understanding of data needs, and data acquisition opportunities.

R17 The project should consider the use of regular local radio broadcasts on issues around land degradation, sustainable land / pasture use, food production and local livelihoods as part of their awareness strategy.

R18 The project should discuss with CACILM the possibility of establishing a project website as part of the CACILM website

R19 The project should build on its good start on capacity building by putting the emphasis on the results of the development, rather than the delivery of development, through the use of competency standards, in identifying requirements, current capacity, and monitoring the improvement in capacity.

R20 The project, with the support of UNDP where appropriate, should systematically follow up discussions with all the institutions listed as providing co-financing into implementation of the project, and where required develop the proposals indicated in the ProDoc.

R21 The approved Project Budget included both GEF and UNDP TRAC funding. The project team have a clear understanding of allocation and use of the GEF component, but are unsure of the TRAC funding. Clarification is therefore required as to the amount of UNDP TRAC funding that has been used, and what is still available

R22 UNDP Country Office to finalize decision on whether additional funding might be available for the gas supply in Kazak Darya as per the negotiations with Uztransgas; and for the CO to formally reply on this to the company.

R 23 Although it may be possible to bring in some additional financial contribution (e.g. through the UNDP / CACILM Capacity Building Budget) the project needs to draft a budget as to how it

[4] This is a new project proposal developed by UNDP on Land Degradation Focal Area and still subject to funding.

would need to re-structure finances to cover the additional management costs for an additional year.

R24 The PMT, and UNDP CO need to meet to discuss and agree mechanisms such as the further use of SSA to provide materials and services, and the use of witness statements, to ensure that cash flow to the field neither compromises required activities – nor contravenes UNDP systems.

R25 The project needs to formalize its replication / scaling-up / promotional strategy for each component as soon as is possible as this will affect what it does, how and with whom.

R26 The project should ensure that its analysis of techniques allows it to report the cost-effectiveness, not just effectiveness of the different techniques of sand stabilization and re-vegetation.

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- ***A capacity development programme, in partnership with CACILM and UNDP on the economic analysis of land degradation, including scenario modelling, using one, or both of the existing project sites as the learning example.***

- ***The development of a concept for expanding the economic analysis and scenario planningto demonstrate the importance to the economy of the country to tackling the land degradation – i.e. moving from it being seen as an ecological problem that needs money spent on it, to being seen as an economic and social problem that can have cost effective environmental solutions.***

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R 31 Include a section in the action planning document that includes not only how the planned activity will deliver the outcomes for that component but contribute towards the overall objective

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implement the project strategy, including strategic partnerships required to ensure sustainability of the project's achievements.

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R41 A proposal should be made by the Steering Committee to UNDP for extension of the project from 4 years to 5 years to allow it to not only develop, test and demonstrate techniques in the project area but for active promotion in the broader impacted areas of the country.

6. Lessons learnt

L1 It is important that the Inception process at the start of a project critically reviews the assumptions that have been made in the Project Document, and is empowered to make adjustments – within bounds. Sometimes it is stated that the Project Preparation process will have delivered a project that should not be adapted until the MTE – unless there have been clear changes in conditions. However sometimes projects, for perfectly legitimate reasons, are prepared with incomplete information and where it is clear with fuller information that some aspects need revision it is better to do that as soon as possible, and the MTE can be too late.

L2 Even when there are major issues to tackle there is a limit to what one project can do, and project design should not be over ambitious as this just sets a project up to fail.

L3 Although there are clear advantages in taking on managers who have a good understanding of government systems they will need to be given time, and support, to learn different ways of managing.

L4 Many managers, in many different positions, in many organizations, are more experienced at identifying activities that will contribute towards an objective, rather than in techniques that will allow them to identify a clear chain of activities that will bring about a result. This means that many projects are better designed to deliver results and outputs rather than outcomes.

L5 learning how to prepare UNDP budgets takes some time as UNDP systems significantly alter many costs from the level they would be for others.

L6 effective teams require a mixture of experience and new ideas, and both top experts and people who really understand the local conditions.

L7 Projects need integrated teams that can see beyond their own components and understand how they fit into the bigger programme.

L8 Problems with cash flow can seriously impact on activities, morale, and perceptions of a project. Although clearly rules have to be followed those rules need to be appropriate for the situations in which projects have to operate, and people need to understand how to interpret and apply them according to the situation.

L9 If society is to address the issues of SLM (and many other environmental issues) we cannot assume that the analysis and messaging that is appropriate for a Ministry of Environment will be the most effective with other agencies. Although Environmental Agencies clearly have an important role we will not be effective if we indicate SLM is an environmental issue that requires others to finance its solution, or to change their activities. We need to demonstrate that SLM is an economic, development and social issue which can be cost effectively solved through environmental solutions.

L10 Projects always take longer to establish, and to achieve outcomes, than is normally anticipated in preparation.

7. Annexes

Project Rating against GEF Criteria

Rating Area	Comments	Rating
Implementation Approach	The project is competently implementing the approach proposed in the Project Document. High calibre teams have been established for the different components, and these are using their knowledge and experience to allow the project to rapidly move into testing of methods that are likely to be appropriate for the conditions. The project has established good relations at all levels and is working well with different stakeholders, though it is clear that introducing participatory processes in these areas will take some time.	Satisfactory
Country ownership/drivers	The identification for the need of the project came from the GoU to the UN, and UNDP responded by providing technical assistance to turn the request into a structured, planned and funded project. Throughout design and implementation the process has been country driven, and therefore complies with arrange of government policies and strategies.	Highly Satisfactory
Outcomes / Achievement of Objectives	The original set of Indicators for achievement of the Objectives and Outcomes of the project were unrealistically ambitious, and the Inception phase of the project led to a proposed, and approved, set of revisions to these – however they are still highly ambitious for the scale of the problem and the project. At present the project is likely to achieve 3 of its outcomes, and partially achieve the 4th, which deals with the institutional and policy framework for integrated land use planning (ILUP). The project should be able to support a piloting of improved ILUP within the project area, but to move from that to changing the institutional and policy framework for these is not really built into the design of the project. The project is likely to achieve most of the Objective. It will have tested, evaluated and promoted innovative solutions, and have assisted planning for wider replication. However the timescale for testing these, with results of issues such as sand stabilization based on re-vegetation taking sometime, it is not clear as to how far replication based on the project's results can realistically have	Satisfactory

	progressed. As already indicated in comments on the outcomes, policy and legislative change on ILUP seems unlikely. The MTET feel that the recommended changes to gathering economic data on different scenarios would assist the project achieve the objectives, and strengthen its contribution towards achieving the goal.	
Stakeholder Participation/public involvement	The project has taken significant steps towards broader stakeholder participation than is standard practice in the country. The project planning and steering include participation from a number of government departments, academia, and groups representing civil society interest. At a field level the project has involved the communities in informal processes, and is formalizing these through the creation of the Water User Groups and Pasture Users Associations. The Project is making efforts to broaden its communications with the broader public, but there are not as yet mechanisms for public participation in processes.	Satisfactory
Sustainability	The project has established good relations with the key agencies that would be responsible for sustaining the activities after the project, who have indicated that they will continue activities. The project has ensured that approaches that have been used are low cost and realistic for post-project funding conditions. The project has worked with communities and Shirkats to develop Groups that should be self-sustaining – provided that they are demonstrating benefits on the ground by the end of the project.	Satisfactory
Monitoring and evaluation	There is good monitoring and evaluation of activities, with the results of these being fed into the activity planning cycle. As the project progresses the team are transferring that process into the higher level monitoring and evaluation of achievement against the objectives. Quality monitoring is a newer process that with further support from the Country Office will continue to improve throughout the project. There is little monitoring of risks, nor consideration of how these should feed into activity planning.	Marginally satisfactory at present, but likely to increase to Satisfactory.
Replication	Due to both the identification of workable, and low cost, solutions	Highly

approach	for wide spread problems, and the relationships established with agencies who would be responsible for replication of these solutions in broader areas the project results should be highly replicable in other parts of the country. With continued, and even strengthened, collaboration with CACILM, the project will be able to make a significant contribution to identifying approaches, both of approach and methods, that could be replicated in other parts of the region.	Satisfactory
Cost effectiveness	Although management costs have risen the costs of operations have been kept extremely low. The methods selected for testing have deliberately been selected as low cost so that they will be sustainable. The project is cost effective in terms of what it will achieve. The MTET are also suggesting that the new data is collected on the value of the benefits arising from the changes in land management, and the economic and social costs of non-implementation. With these figures available the real cost effectiveness of the project, and the land management models it is testing will become apparent.	Highly Satisfactory
Overall Project Rating	The project has made a good start in delivering a highly ambitious project, tackling very difficult issues, in a remote and difficult part of the country. There have already been a number of clear successes from the project, and these are well recognized by the relevant government agencies who have already expressed a commitment to replicate the methods recommended by the project. Although the first rounds of planning, budgeting and reporting had some issues the project has already identified many of these, and with support from the CO, and the projects Technical Advisor, they are improving these each round. The MTET have made a number of suggestions in the body of the report for areas that could be improved – however many of the more substantial ones in this are comments on the Project Document and it is hoped that the MTE will assist in allowing revisions to be made.	Satisfactory

Acknowledgements

The MTE Team would like to thank all the staff and people connected with the SLM Project who gave freely of their time and ideas to make the MTE 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, Irina Bekmirzaeva, who supplied most of information and key contacts.

The evaluation team would like to express its gratitude and appreciation to all the stakeholders it interviewed. Their contributions were most appreciated, and the facts and opinions they shared played a critical part in the conduct of this evaluation.

The evaluation team would also like to extend special thanks to the personnel of the United Nations Development Programme for their time to try and answer every question we asked and to discuss the points we took every opportunity to raise.

ToRs

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
TERMS OF REFERENCE / SPECIAL SERVICE AGREEMENT

I. Job Information	
Job Title:	International Mid-Term Evaluator
Project Title	UNDP-GEF project "Achieving Ecosystem Stability on Degraded Land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum Desert"
Duration of the assignment:	25 working days during September- October 2010
Duty station:	One mission to Uzbekistan.
Expected places of travel:	Tashkent, Kazakhdarya (Karakalpakstan) and Kyzyl Rovat Bukhara oblast, Uzbekistan)
Reports to / Supervisor	Head of Environment and Energy Unit, UNDP Uzbekistan

II. Background

The goal of the present project is *to achieve ecosystem stability on degraded land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum desert in Uzbekistan, thus reversing the spread of deserts, increasing carbon sequestration, enhancing habitats for biodiversity and achieving public health and socio-economic benefits, on a sustainable basis.* It will contribute to this goal by testing, evaluating and promoting innovative solutions to the problems of land degradation, particularly mobile sands, at a pilot scale in the selected localities of Kyzyl Rovat and Kazakhdarya, and other pilot sites of the project on an area of about 500 ha of degraded lands. This project is a part of the Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM).

Outcome 1: Plant species, having both strong ecological and economic benefits for succession in desert and semi-desert ecosystems identified and sustainable land management methods tested;

Outcome 2: Mobile sands stabilized and degraded land rehabilitated in partnership with local communities;

Outcome 3: Institutional and policy framework for integrated land use planning and management, strengthened;

Outcome 4: Monitoring and evaluation, learning and adaptive management, implemented.

The national implementing agency is the Main Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Uzbekistan. Detailed information about the project can be found at: http: //www.undp.uz/projects/project.php?id=123

Objective of the Mid-Term Evaluation

The main objective of this Mid-Term Evaluation is to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of project activities in relation to the stated objective and to produce plausible recommendations on how to improve the project management practices during the remaining two years of the project (scheduled completion in January 2012). The Mid-term Evaluation serves as an agent of change

and plays a critical role in supporting accountability. Its main objectives are:

- to strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the project;
- to ensure accountability for the achievement of the project's objective of improving the sustainability of land management and delivering global benefits;
- to enhance organizational and development learning;
- to enable informed decision – making.

Particular emphasis should be put on the current project results and the possibility of achieving all the objectives in the given timeframe, taking into consideration the speed, at which the project is proceeding.

The mid-term evaluation is to be undertaken in accordance with the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html).

III. Scope of Work

A team of independent consultants (2) will conduct the evaluation. This team will be composed of one International Consultant or Team Leader and one National Consultant.

Specifically, the International Evaluator/ Team Leader will perform the following tasks:

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

The National Consultant, to be recruited separately, will provide input in reviewing all project documentation and will provide the International Consultant with a compilation of information prior to the mid-term evaluation mission.

Issues to be addressed by the Mid-Term Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation should assess:

Project concept and design, reviewing problems/issues addressed by the project and the project strategy, considering appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives.

Implementation of the project in terms of progress towards project results, quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out.

Project outputs, outcomes and impacts 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, inclusion of relevant stakeholders.

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

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

Measurement of change: Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before and after the project intervention.

Project strategy: how and why outputs and strategies contribute to the achievement of the

expected results.

Sustainability: Extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after the project has come to an end.

2. **Project's Adaptive Management Framework**

(e) Monitoring Systems

- Assess the monitoring tools currently being used:
- Ensure the monitoring system, including performance indicators, at least meets GEF minimum requirements[5].

(f) Risk Management

- Validate whether the risks identified in the project document and PIR 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;
- Assess how the project's risk identification and management systems are applied and can further be strengthened.

(g) Work Planning

- Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it.
- Are work planning processes result-based[6]? If not, suggest ways to improve work planning;
- Consider financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.

(h) Reporting

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

3. **Underlying Factors**

- 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;
- Review the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made;
- Assess the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project.

4. **UNDP Contribution**

- 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
- Assess contribution to the project from UNDP "soft" assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination).

5. **Partnership Strategy**

- Assess how partners are involved in the project's adaptive management framework:

[5] Please refer to section 3.2 of the GEF's "Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures", available at http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html

[6] RBM Support documents available at http://www.undp.org/eo/methodologies.htm

- Involving partners and stakeholders in the selection of indicators and other measures of performance
- Using already existing data and statistics
- Analyzing progress towards results and determining project strategies.

- Assess how local stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making; Include an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project and suggestions for improvement if necessary;

Methodological framework

The mid-term evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. It must be easily understood by project partners and applicable to the remaining duration of the project.

The mid-term evaluation should provide as much gender disaggregated data as possible.

The methodology to be used by the mid-term evaluator should be provided in detail. It should include information on:

- Documentation review (desk study) and field visits;
- Interviews and questionnaires should be held with the following organizations and individuals at minimum: UNDP Uzbekistan, UNDP/GEF RTA from Bratislava, Project Team, The National Project Coordinator International Advisor, CACILM, Project Board Members, Leaders and members of local communities cooperating with project;
- Participatory techniques and other relevant approaches for the gathering and analysis of data.

The Mid Term Evaluator would also provide ratings of Project achievements according to GEF Project Review Criteria.

The report shall be submitted to the UNDP Uzbekistan office, Head of Environment & Energy Unit, address: T. Shevchenko str. 4, 100029, Tashkent, Uzbekistan Tel: (99871) 120-3450, Fax: (99871) 120-3485. Prior to approval of the final report, a draft version shall be circulated for comments to UNDP-GEF team (inc. UNDP BRC, Slovakia), government counterparts, including: National Project Coordinator (the Main Forestry Department), Project Manager and UNDP-Uzbekistan Country Office.

IV. Expected Key Outputs:

Activity and Deliveries	**Timeframe**
Mission preparation: review of supporting documents, drafting evaluation methodology. **Work plan, mission agenda and report outline submitted**	4 days
Mission – 1st phase: Visits to the field, interviews, questionnaires, de-briefings	10 days
Mission- 2nd phase: Consolidation of findings, drawing of conclusions, preparing the first draft of the evaluation report, discussion of draft with key stakeholders. **Draft Evaluation Report submitted and comments received from supervisor.**	5 days
Post mission Wrap-up: Finalization of the mid-term evaluation report (incorporating comments received on first draft. **Final Report submitted and accepted by supervisor.**	6 days

Products expected from the mid-term evaluation

The key product expected from this mid-term evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report in English. The length of the mid-term evaluation report shall not exceed 30 pages in total (not including annexes).

Working Days:

The assignment is to commence no later than ***September 17, 2010*** *and be* completed **by October 31 2010.**

Payment Conditions:

Payment will be released upon satisfactory provision of respective deliverables:

1.	Work Plan and report outline	20% of total lump sum
2.	Draft Evaluation Report	30% of total lump sum
3.	Final Report	50% of total lump sum

Progress against Indicators

	Description	Description of Indicator	Baseline Level[4]	Target Level at end of project	Level at 30 October 2010
Objective	To test, evaluate and promote innovative solutions to the problems of land degradation at a pilot scale in Kyzyl Rovat (Bukhara Oblast) and Kazakhdarya (Karakalpakstan) and replicate best practices in order to achieve ecosystem stability on degraded land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum Desert in Uzbekistan.	Area of degraded land rehabilitated by applying the best practices developed by the Project, tested in other areas in Uzbekistan, Central Asia (CACILM) and other countries to stabilize mobile sand and/or arrest degradation.	In large desert territories, saxaul plantations have been established to stabilize mobile sand. Local communities have little or no role in addressing land degradation problems.	By the end of year 5 the Project will have tested new methodologies of land management on project territory of 500 ha. and prepared replication strategies for land rehabilitation on 100,000 ha outside of project area that will be implemented under the CACILM umbrella.	Sand Stabalization and Pasture Enrichment activities are ongoing. In total 24 hectares have been planted so far using a combination of new plants, new planting techiques and physical barriers (to achieve short / mid term conditions for successful plant establishment). Implementation of plans for sustainable management of livestock and pastures developed by project at project sites commenced (total area of 388000 ha). Community organizations created: community pasture users (commission under the rural population meeting on protection and rational pasture use); water user groups for sustainable exploitation of project's pumping equipment. Created zoo-veterinary points began providing services on sustainable livestock to the local population. Artificial insemination of cattle (131 heads) and small cattle (1700 heads) organized. The project demonstration sites cover 24 hectares.The tested methods and techniques will be replicated on Livestock component particularly in pasture enrichment activities.
		SLM policies and legislation and integrated land use	No explicit policy for integrated land use	By the end of the project at least 50% of officials of responsible local and regional	Local regional authorities involved in training and practical implementation of new methods of land use planning; Guidelines and Manuals on application of SLM practices

		planning process	planning and management for desert lands. While legislation exists it is not explicit and implementation is weak.	organizations will have direct experience of practically applying integrated land use planning. By the end of the project at least 50% of responsible officials will have better capacity to practically implement relevant laws.	prepared. Recommendations on land use improvement at project sites developed and agreed with national implementing agency. The first draft of amendments to national land legislation on land use ("Land Code", "Law on Farm Enterprise") developed. Study program to improve knowledge of local communities and staff of organizations involved in land use management on integrated land use planning developed and launched. Decision to recruit international expert on capacity building made and post advertised. In total, 25 persons involved, including: 7 persons from the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan (one Deputy Head of Department, 4 senior specialists and 2 leading specialist. They mainly work in economic and crop production sections); 7 persons from the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic of Karakalpakstan (2 Heads of Division, 4 senior specialists, one specialist); 5 persons from Muynak District (First Deputy Khokim, Head of Muynak District Geologic Cadastre Division and Senior Specialist of Muynak District Khokimiyat, one specialist). On local level: 3 officials of Kazahdarya community (Chairman of citizens rural meeting, director of shirkat household, director of forestry department in Kazahdarya); 3 officials of Kizilrovat community (Chairman of citizens rural meeting, director of shirkat household, director of forestry department in Kizilrovat)
Outcome 1	Plant species, having both strong ecological	Number of plant species planted and grown in	Currently only 3-4 plant species are	By the end of the 5th year at least 10 new plant species / varieties	Testing of selected species of desert plants (18), sand stabilization techniques (5) and enrichment of degraded pastures ongoing. At present approx 18 plant species

	and economic benefits for succession in desert and semi-desert ecosystems identified and conservation agriculture methods tested.	Karakalpakstan and Bukhara oblast for stabilization of mobile sands.	used for stabilizing mobile sands.	and planting approaches/technologies are tested and transplanted in the region to stabilize sands and stop land degradation in the Bukhara oblast and Karakalpakstan by the Forestry departments.	planted for sand stabalization and 6 species for pasture enrichment in total area of 15 ha. However, pasture enrichment plots should have much wider impact when they seed as they will improve diversity of fodder species in areas around the enrichment plots. Round table on "The project's strategy for sand stabilization and enrichment of desert pastures in the project areas" carried out. Project startegy on this direction was widely disseminated, discussed and agreed by representatives of governmental, scientific research and public organizations. International organizations and mass media representatives were actively involved.
		Planted seedlings survival rate.	Low survival rates (level to be checked at project outset).	Survival rates improved by at least 20% by end of project.	Some initial survival rates of saxaul poor due to poor quality of seed bought from Forestry agency. All future saxaul will be derived from seed collected / grown by the project / local forestry staff / communities. Monitoring of development and survival rate of plants ongoing. Data will be summarized at the end of project implementation
		Revival of traditional approaches and introduction of other methods in the area of sustainable land usage.	Traditional knowledge is being lost, new approaches not known.	By the end of the Project, at least 20 households (families) use traditional approaches and / or other new sustainable land usage methods.	Action plan of activities on implementation of sustainable land use principles for economic entities (shirkat, farming and dehkhan enterprises) into practice developed. Implementation commenced in 38 households (33 households in Kazahdarya and 5 households in Kizilrovot)
Outcome 2	Mobile sands stabilized and degraded land rehabilitated in partnership with	Number of days per year with wind-blown sand in the vicinity of KR	The number of days with windblown sand in KR and KD to be	Number of days with windblown sand in the project area will be reduced by a estimated 50% within six to ten	N/A. Data will be obtained in early 2011.

	desert communities.	and KD.	determined in year 1.	yeas of project completion as a result of project intervention (i.e. upon maturing of plantations).	
		Area of degraded land rehabilitated and desert ecosystems stabilized in KR and KD.	48,000 hectares of degraded land in KR. Baseline, in hectares, for KD will be collected in year 1.	By the end of year 5, at least 250 ha around each KR and KD has been rehabilitated and used by the communities in a sustainable manner.	Activities on rehabilitation of degraded land on project sites ongoing.Pasture use plans prepared and agreed with all stakeholders (at each site) - pasture use plans cover 388 000 hectares and should result in their gradual recovery as pasture use is better distributed. Additionally, improvement of 12,5 hectares of irrigated land and household plots initiated through training, advidery manuals and infrastructure rehabilitation. The area of experimental plots for mobile sand stabilization and enrichment of degraded pastures is 24 ha; area of sand stabilization and fodder plant nurseries as well as tree-fruit plants is 4,7 ha. 40,5 ha have been rehabilitated at this moment. More over approbation of seasonal pasture rotation system covers 388 000 ha around the settlements has been started in this year. The dynamics of figures on rehabilitated pastures territory will be revealed during next year.
		The Number of alternative viable income generation options which can improve living standards and reduce land degradation	Few (number to be identified during initial socio-economic assessment).	By the end of 5th year, sources of sustainable incomes and employment in the communities will have measurably diversified, increasing by at least 3 new sources of income and 10% more	Various types of income generation opportunities not related to unsustainable land use identified together with local community groups. Training on business planning completed, 8 business plans developed and 4 of them will be launched this year. At this moment 8 new sources of income identified as viable.

		available to the community members.		sustainable jobs.	
		Number of approaches and technologies for reducing pressure of desert vegetation from fuel wood extraction.	none	By the end of the project at least 4 appropriate and sustainable approaches and technologies for reducing fuel wood pressure tested and utilized by local population.	Energy expert recruited and assessment of relevant experience from other projects made. A plan of action prepared and tender for equipment prepared for purchase of relevant technology (solar cookers, solar water heating, biogas, etc.) Project continues to seek co-financing for gas distribution network in Kazakhdarya village (Karakalpakstan). 4 approaches identified (solar cookers, solar water heating, biogas and water lifting equipment for wells and testing of 3 will be launched in early 2011).
Outcome 3	Institutional and policy framework for integrated land use planning and management, strengthened.	Number of Forestry Department and Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management employees aware of the Integrated Land Use Planning Process.	Baselines figures will be obtained upon commencement of the project.	By the end of year 5, at least 50% more of the questioned respondents from Forestry Department and Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management employees in comparison with the baseline figure in year 1 are knowledgeable about Integrated Land Use Planning and Management.	The analysis on the Integrated land use planning Survey to determine the knowledge level of local communities, as well as officials of organizations involved in land management at different levels. On the basis of analysis, study program on capacity building for these respondents prepared. Guidelines on the fundamentals of land use prepared. Initial awareness and capacity development study program commenced. A Concept Note on Integrated land use planning and management has been developed and being discussed with national stakeholders.

		Local communities trained in participatory land use planning and management.	Capacity is weak both among officials and the local population (in terms of human resources, tools, etc) for the implementation of an integrated approach to land use planning and management.	By the end of year 5, capacity (through training) of local administrations officials as well as local community members, to implement an effective Integrated Land Use Planning policy for desert lands, is enhanced by more than 50% in comparison with level of year 1.	16 workshops involving over 485 members of local communities (from which 190 women, 39%) on the following topics: "Technology of sand stabilization, the creation of forest stands, seed production and cultivation of seedlings in nurseries"; "Livestock and the Environment," "Ways of increasing the productivity of livestock," "Prevention and fight against animal diseases; "Optimal methods of agricultural production in low water availability"; Basics of entrepreneurship and business planning" etc. Farmers Field Schools (2) created in order to teach local residents on sustainable land use principles directly at their plots.
Outcome 4	Monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptive management implemented.	Innovative approaches to SLM emulated and replicated.	Few practical examples of how to undertake integrated land use planning or management are available.	By the end of the Project relevant experience is available to CACILM partners and within 5 years post project is replicated in at least 5 other communities beside Kazakhdarya and Kyzyl Rovat.	n/a

Itinerary

Agenda

For the visit of Martin Hollandss, Mid-Term Evaluation Expert for the UNDP GEF Project "UNDP GEF Project - Achieving Ecosystem Stability on degraded land in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum Desert"

September 22- October 6, 2010, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Wednesday, September 22, 2010			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
04.00 5.00-13.00	Arrival at Tashkent Hotel "Markaziy"	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Djakhongir Nazarov, AFA of the Project	 Check in for accommodation, resting
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch		
14:00 – 16:00	SLM project's office	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov, National Consultant for MTE *Project personnel:* Mrs. Irina Bekmirzaeva, PM Mr. Mark Anstey, CTA Mr. Umid Nazarkulov, NTC Mr. Djakhongir Nazarov, AFA Mr. Zinoviy Novitskiy, Leader of the group for Plant Testing Salohiddin Salikhov, PR Assistant Mr.Sardor Rakhmatullaev, Clerk	Introduction Mission schedule discussion List of required project's documentation
16:00 – 18:00	SLM project's office	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov Mr. Mark Anstey Mr. Zinoviy Novitskiy, Leader of the group for Plant Testing of the Project	Preliminary discussion of forwards activities and acquaintance with situation Introduction and presentation of the project activities and implementation results Plant Testing of the Project
Dinner and Desk Work			
Thursday, September 23, 2010, Meetings in Tashkent			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
09:30-10:30	Main Forestry Department of the Republic of Uzbekistan (MFD) National Implementing Agency of the project	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov ***MFD:*** Sobir Ergashev, Chairman of the MFD, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, National Project Coordinator (or Mr.Muratbay Ganiev, Deputy Chairman, or International Department specialist)	Acquaintance and Exchange of information
11:30 – 13.00	SLM project office	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov *Project personnel:* Mr. Surat Yusupov, Leader of the	Acquaintance and exchange of information about all activity in the field of livestock

		group for Livestock of the Project	
13:00 - 14:00 Lunch			
14:30-15:00	SLM project office	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov *Project personnel:* Mr. Surat Yusupov, Leader of the group for Livestock of the Project	Acquaintance and exchange of information about activity in the field of livestock
15.30 – 16.30	UNDP Country Office	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov Mrs. Nato Ahizalashvili, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Uzbekistan Mrs. Sitara Syed, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative Mrs. Rano Baykhanova, Environment and Energy Unit	Introduction
Dinner and Desk Work			
Friday, September 24, 2010, Meetings in Tashkent			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
10:00 – 11.00	SLM project office	Mr. Martin Hollands Mr. Mansur Amonov	Desk work
11.00 – 12.30	CACILM Office in Tashkent	Mr. Martin Hollands Mr. Mansur Amonov Mrs. Raisa Taryannikova, Head of Secretariat CACILM Office in Tashkent Mrs. Gulchehra Hasanhanova, Project monitoring Specialist CACILM Office in Tashkent	Exchange information
13:00 - 14:00 Lunch			
14:30 - 16:30	SLM project office	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov *Project personnel:* Mr. Tolkin Farmonov, Leader of the group for Integrated Land Use of the Project A.Chertovitskiy, consultant for Integrated Land Use of the Project	Acquaintance and exchange of information about all activity of Project in the field of Land Using
16:30 – 18.30	SLM project office	Mr. Martin Hollands Mr. Mansur Amonov	Desk work
Dinner and Desk Work			
Saturday, September 25, 2010, Meetings in Bukhara Region			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
10:00 – 13:00	Desk work		Exchange information
13.00 – 14.00 Lunch			
16.00 – 17.30	Departure	Mr. Martin Hollands Mr. Mark Anstey Mr. Mansur Amonov	Flight to Bukhara
18.00 – 19.00	Bukhara City	Mr. Martin Hollands Mr. Mark Anstey Mr. Mansur Amonov	Acquaintance and Exchange of information of community activities

		Project personnel: Ms. Zaynab Solieva, National project Expert for development of small business	
Dinner and Desk Work			
Sunday, September 26, 2010, Meetings in Bukhara Region and Karakalpakstan			
06.00 – 08.30	Departure	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mark Anstey Mr. Mansur Amonov	Travel to Kizil Ravot
08.30 – 12.30	Information Centre of Project	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mark Anstey Mr. Mansur Amonov U.Nazarkulov ***Area representatives:*** Mr. Nurmuhammad Kudabaev, local expert for Agriculture, head of shirkat Mr. Nurmuhammad Alishev, head of Local Forestry Branch Mr. Kozim Abuev, Local Community Chief	Acquaintance and Exchange of information, discussion with experts, community leaders and members
12.45 – 13.30 Lunch			
13.45 – 16.30	Territory of "Kizil Ravot" village Projects activities in the field: Zoo veterinary service point; Plant plots; Sand protection areas; Field school plots.	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mark Anstey Mr. Mansur Amonov U.Nazarkulov ***Area representatives:*** Mr. Nurmuhammad Kudabaev, Head of shirkat\farm, local expert on Agriculture, Mr. Kozim Abuev, Local Community Authority Participants in the project activities	Acquaintance with project pilot points and Exchange of information
16.30 – 21.00	Departure	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mark Anstey Mr. Mansur Amonov U.Nazarkulov	Travel to Nukus by car
21.00	Nukus City	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov U.Nazarkulov	Check in for accommodation
Dinner and Desk Work			
Monday, September 27, 2010, Meetings in Karakalpakstan			
Visit to pilot area of "Kazakdarya"			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
9:00 – 10.30	Departure	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov	Travel to Kazakdarya by car
10:30 -12:30	Information Centre of Project	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov ***Area representatives:*** Mr. Jetkerbay Bukeshev, head of Local Forestry Branch, farm chief Mr. Orakbay Eshmuratov, local expert for Agriculture	Acquaintance and Exchange of information
12:30 – 13:30 Lunch			
14:00 – 17:30	Territory of	Mr. Martin Hollands	Acquaintance with project

	"Kazakdarya" village Projects activities in the field: Zoo veterinary service point; Plant plots; Sand protection areas; Field school plots.	Mr. Mansur Amonov ***Area representatives:*** Mr. Jetkerbay Bukeshev, Head of Local Forestry Branch, Mr. Orakbay Eshmuratov, local expert for Agriculture, householders, local social institutions, project experts	pilot points and Exchange of information
17:30-19:00		Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov	Travel to Nukus by car
Dinner and Desk Work			
Tuesday, September 28, 2010, Meetings in Karakalpakstan			
10.00 – 11.00	Main Forestry Department of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov Mr. Ahmed Ibragimov, General Director of the Main Forestry Department of RK	Exchange information
11.30 – 12.30	SLM Liaison office in Nukus	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov *Project personnel:* Mr. Marat Nurillaev, senion clerk of Project Office in Nukus Mr. Oljabay Shaniyazov, National Expert for Forestry (Plant testing component), FFS instructors	Exchange information
13:00-14:00 - Lunch			
14.30 – 15.30	Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan UNDP Project office	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov Mr. Muratbay Mukhanov, Head of Secretariat for Agriculture and Water recourses of MC of RK, the Member of Project Board	Exchange information
16.00 – 18.30	"Conservation of Tugai Forest and Strengthening Protected Areas System in the Amudarya Delta of Karakalpakstan"	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov Mr. H.Sherimbetov, Project Manager	Exchange information
20.15 – 22.30	Departure	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov	Flight to Tashkent
23.00	Hotel "Markaziy"	Mr. Martin Hollandss	Accommodation
Wednesday, September 29, 2010, Meetings in Tashkent			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
10.00 – 11.00	SLM Project Office	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov project personnel	Additional acquaintance and exchange of information
11.00 - 13.00	UNDP Country Office	Mr. Martin Holland Mr. Mansur Amonov Mr. Abduvakkos Abdurahmanov, Head of Environment and Energy Unit	Exchange information

		Mr. Makhmud Shaumarov, Programme Associate, UNDP E&E Unit	
13:00-14:00 – Lunch			
14:30-15:30	MFD Land Use Department	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov *Project personnel:* Mr. Alexander Kholmatov, GIS specialist of project	Review of GIS progress in framework of capacity building in forestry branch
16:00 – 18:00	SLM Project Office	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov project personnel	Additional acquaintance and exchange of information
Dinner and Desk Work			
Thursday, September 30, 2010, Meetings in Tashkent			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
09.00 – 13.00	SLM Project Office	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov *Project personnel:* Mrs. Irina Bekmirzaeva Mr. Djakhongir Nazarov	Additional acquaintance and exchange of information of project activities
13:00 – 14:00 Lunch			
14:30 – 15.30	SLM Project Office	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov *Project personnel:* Mrs. Irina Bekmirzaeva Mr. Djakhongir Nazarov	Additional acquaintance and exchange of information of project activities
16.00 - 18:30	Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov Mr.Bahreddin Muradov, Main specialist on agriculture and ecology issues	Exchange information
Dinner and Desk Work			
Friday, October 1, 2010, Staying in Tashkent			
The whole day	Desk Work		
Saturday, October 2, 2010, Staying in Tashkent			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
The whole day	Desk Work		
Sunday, October 3, 2010, Staying in Tashkent			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
The whole day	Desk Work, preparation to the workshop		
Monday, October 4, 2010, Staying in Tashkent			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
10:00-12:00	Main Forestry Department building Conference hall	Mr. Martin Hollands Mr. Mansur Amonov Project staff, experts	Workshop in frames of project progress and discussions
12:00 – 12:30 Coffee break			
12.30 – 14.30	Continued		
14.30 - 17:00	SLM Project Office	Mr. Martin Hollands Mr. Mansur Amonov Project staff, experts	Exchange information
17.30 – 18.30	UzGidroMet (National Agency for Hydrometeorology)	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov Mr. Bakhtiyor Kadirov, Deputy	Exchange information

		Director, Project Board member, National Coordinator of UN Convention on Combat desertification	
Dinner and Desk Work			
Tuesday, October 5, 2010, Staying in Tashkent			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
09.30 – 10.30	National Association of NGO of Uzbekistan "ARMON"	Mr. Martin Hollands Mr. Mansur Amonov Mrs. Dilbar Zaynutdinova, Head of Center of Enviremental Law, Project Board member	Exchange information
10.30 – 13.00	SLM Project Office	Meeting experts, staff members etc.	Additional acquaintance and exchange of information
13.00 – 14.00 Lunch			
14.00 – 14.30	UNDP Country Office	Mr. Martin Holland Mr. Mansur Amonov Mr. Abduvakkos Abdurahmanov, Head of Environment and Energy Unit Mr. Makhmud Shaumarov, Programme Associate, UNDP E&E Unit	Exchange information
14.30 – 16.00	UNDP Country Office	Mr. Martin Holland Mr. Mansur Amonov Mrs. Nato Ahizalashvili Mrs. Sitara Syed	Exchange information
16.30 – 18.00	Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations Investments and Trade	Mr. Martin Hollandss Mr. Mansur Amonov Mr.Alisher Mursaliev Head of the Department, Project Board member	Exchange information
Dinner and Desk Work			
Wednesday, October 6, 2010, Departure from Tashkent			
Time	**Venue**	**Participants**	**Subject**
03.00 - 03.30	Hotel "Markaziy"	Mr. Martin Hollands accompanied by Mr. Djakhongir Nazarov	Checkout
03.30 – 04.00	Trip to Airport		
04.00 – 06.00	Airport		Customs and Border Clearance
06.00	Flight No _____ to _____		

People interviewed

UNDP CO

Nato Ahizalashvili	Deputy Resident Representative in Uzbekistan
Sitara Syed	Assistant Resident Representative
Abduvakkos Abdurahmanov,	Head of Environment and Energy Unit
Rano Baykhanova	Programme Associate of Environment and Energy Unit
Makhmud Shaumarov	Programme Associate of Environment and Energy Unit

Project Staff

Irina Bekmirzaeva	National Project Manager
Umid Nazarkulov	National Technical Coordinator
Djakhongir Nazarov	Financial and Administrative Assistant

Project Consultants

Mark Anstey	International Technical Adviser
Zinoviy Novitskiy	Team leader Plant testing group
Suratbek Yusupov	Team Leader Livestock group
Tolkin Farmonov	Team Leader Integrated land use group
Aleksandr.Chertovitskiy	National consultant on Integrated land use
Zaynab Solieva	National expert for development of small business
Marat Nurillaev	Senior clerk of Project Office in Nukus
Oljabay Shaniyazov	National Expert for Forestry (Plant testing component)
Alexander Kholmatov	GIS specialist
Madjid Khodjaev	National Expert for renewable energy resources
Baxt Ajiniyazov	Livestock expert in Kazakhdarya village
Dilfuza Madreyimova	Instructor of Farmers Field School

Departments of Government of Uzbekistan

Muratbay Ganiev	Deputy Chairman of Forestry department
Bahreddin Muradov	Main specialist on agriculture and ecology issues Ministry of Economy
Bakhtiyor Kadirov	Deputy Director, National Coordinator of UN Convention on Combat desertification Uzhydromet

Departments of Government of Karakalpakstan

Ahmed Ibragimov	Chairman of the Main Forestry Department
Murat Mukhanov	Head of Secretariat of Council of Ministers of Karakalpakstan on Agriculture and Water Management

International organization, Projects, NGOs

Raisa Taryannikova,	Head of National Secretariat, CACILM Office in Tashkent
Gulchehra Hasanhanova	Project monitoring Specialist CACILM Office in Tashkent
H.Sherimbetov	Project Manager “Conservation of Tugai Forest and Strengthening Protected Areas System in the Amudarya Delta of Karakalpakstan”
Dilbar Zaynutdinova	National Association of NGO of Uzbekistan “ARMON”, Head of Center of Enviremental Law

Beneficiaries

Nurmuhammad Kudabaev	Local expert for Agriculture, Head of shirkat in Kizil Ravat
Kozim Abuev	Local Community Chief in Kizil Ravat
Jetkerbay Bukeshev	Head of Local Forestry Branch in Kazakdarya
Orakbay Eshmuratov	Local expert for Agriculture, Deputy head of shirkat in Kazakdarya

List of Documents reviewed by the MTET as part of the Evaluation

Results of Stakeholder Workshop
Documents reviewed
GEF, 2000, Integrating Capacity Development into Project Design and Evaluation
GEF, 2006, The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
SLM Project – Inception Report
UNDP Evaluation Office, 2002, Guidelines for Outcome Evaluators
UNDP Evaluation Office, 2002, Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results
UNDP Evaluation Office, Assessment of Development Results
UNDP & GOU, 2005, Country Programme Action Plan 2005-2009
Main Web Sites Consulted:
UNDP - GEF M&E
CDB Sec web site
National Capacity Self-Assessment
http://www.unesco.org/mab/mabProg.shtml (UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB))
http://www.gefweb.org (GEF Web Site)
http://www.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/html/bp14-evaluatingeffectiveness/cover.html: (A framework for assessing management effectiveness of protected areas)
http://www.undp.uz/projects/project.php?id=45