

UNDP Management Response

Project Title: UNDP-GEF Project “Reducing pressures on natural resources from competing land use in non-irrigated arid mountain, semi-desert and desert landscapes of Uzbekistan”

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Overall comments: The GEF full size project “Reducing Pressures on Natural Resources from Competing Land Use in Non-Irrigated Arid Mountain, Semi-Desert and Desert Landscapes of Uzbekistan” is created to support the improved, more sustainable and more resilient land use management of non-irrigated arid desert, steppe and mountain landscapes of Uzbekistan, which constitute the vast majority of its territory, and reduce competitive pressures between different land uses, particularly pasture use and forestry. Practical solutions of how this can be done were to be demonstrated in two ecologically and socio-economically representative districts (Zaamin and Karakul) and a model was to be developed for undertaking district level integrated land use planning. The project components are (1) Field level investment to transform the baseline approach, and (2) Policy, legal and institutional mechanisms for further developing a cross-sectoral environment and in-country capacity. Component 1 herewith should develop best practices on sustainable rangeland and forestry management with the help of Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) and should upscale the results in the target districts. Component 2 should help facilitate an enabling environment at system, institutional and individual levels for applying integrated land use approaches beyond the intervention areas.

Evaluation Recommendation 1:	1. Put more efforts in the development of sound project concepts. The main shortcoming of the Project is rooted in a project concept that has not been fore-seen a logical flow of activities from local small-scale and micro-measures which relieve the pressure on dryland to upscaled interventions with broad impact, although this is understood as the overarching goal. Project concepts and designs must be based on reasonable results chains and it must be clear for the user of the LogFrame which activity is carried out for what purpose and why it is supported by the Project. A stronger guidance and quality control by UNDP and GEF is required.		
Management Response:	Partially agree. The concept of the project is aimed at the effective application of integrated land use management planning at the district level, and the existing experience dissemination with best practices in sustainable land use. Therefore, the expected results of the project activities are considered jointly and includes the dissemination of best practices in sustainable land management after testing in local areas.		
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*

			Status	Comments
1.1 In future programming, where possible, to ensure support of pilot and demonstration measures on local level by a replication strategy which indicates the chance of their wide application under the specific circumstances.	December 2021	SDC	Ongoing	
1.2 Strengthening the quality assurance process for the project development stage and the SOP on the project management.	December 2020	SDC, RMU		
Evaluation Recommendation 2:	2. Only livelihood activities which are linked to the conservation target to be supported by environmental projects with identified contribution of local communities towards environmental protection. Even though improvement of the environmental situation is usually not possible without improving the socio-economic situation of people, this does not mean that all socio-economic measures have a positive effect on the environment.			
Management Response:	Partially agree. Project activities were aimed at providing alternative income sources, without harming the environment and reducing the burden on the natural resources (forests, pastures, rainfed farming) use, which were repeatedly discussed by the beneficiaries at the local and national levels with the leading experts and scientists involvement to ensure their efficiency and sustainability, according to UNDP and GEF procedures.			
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
2.1. To strengthen effectiveness of alternative income-generating activities ¹ to alleviate a human threat to specified conservation target within environmental projects.	December 2024	SDC Team Environmental projects	Ongoing	
Evaluation Recommendation 3:	3. Implement follow-up measures to make the “Law of Pastures” fully operational. The “Law of Pastures” is a success story of the Project, but it still needs considerable efforts and resources to become operational. Guidance needs to be given to decision-makers especially for an adequate treatment of environmental concerns. UNDP may offer the government technical assistance towards this end and may use for this purpose committed but still unused track funds.			
Management Response:	Partially agree. As a next step UNDP will provide guidance/assistance where possible on practical implementation of the Law within its ongoing and future interventions with a special emphasize on environmental concerns.			
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	

¹ low-environmental-impact livelihood activities

			Status	Comments
3.1. Include specific activities where relevant in ongoing and future programming on practical implementation of the Law on Pastures with focus on environmental concerns.	December 2022	SDC Relevant environmental projects	Ongoing	
Evaluation Recommendation 4:	4. Give more guidance as regards accounting of co-financing. Assessing the level of co-financing is challenging as it is not included in project monitoring. It is particularly difficult to monitor in-kind contributions without guidance what falls under in-kind contribution. Without such guidance, equal monitoring is not possible.			
Management Response:	Agree. In future, UNDP will take into account and monitor the participation of each national and local partner in co-financing the project.			
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
4.1. To develop a tool (to be include to the SOP) as a clearer mechanism for monitoring of in-kind contribution from the government.	December 2020	SDC, GGC, RMU	Ongoing	
Evaluation Recommendation 5:	5. Reconsider the rating scale of the criterion „relevance”. Relevance” can now only be rated as “relevant” or “not relevant”, whereas a finer scale extending e.g. from “highly relevant” over “partly relevant” to “not relevant” would be more appropriate to mirror project reality including the fact that a project often consists of several aspects/ components with different levels of relevance.			
Management Response:	Disagree. This recommendation is beyond of UNDP Uzbekistan mandate and being strictly outlined in UNDP GEF system.			
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
5.1 UNDP will only communicate the recommendation to GEF Focal Point in IRH.	February 2020	SDC, RMU	Not started	
Evaluation Recommendation 6:	6. Concentrate on demonstration, pilot projects and livelihood activities which have a potential for upscaling. Demonstration and pilot projects have the function to show on a very small scale what works and what does not work, and to provide a blueprint for something big; they are therefore the first step of a comprehensive programme for change on a much larger scale. If there are no plans and opportunities to do the second step, there is little need to prepare these blueprints. An upscaling strategy needs to be an integral part of local micro-measures.			
Management Response:	Partially agree. The project demonstrated a number of alternative approaches to reduce the pressure on the land, which served as well to increase the technical capacity of partners. The most important barrier that people will not copy and replicate successful pilots is the lack of			

	funds and of technical knowledge. At the same time, the government provides access to various microloans (for the development of the poultry, drip irrigation, private entrepreneurship, purchase of agricultural equipment, etc.).			
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
6.1 Prior to implementation to assess upscaling potential of the demonstration, pilot projects and livelihood activities and barriers to further upscaling and broad application of UNDP experience. Where relevant to develop a replication strategy and mechanism in the project concept.	December 2020	SDC Relevant environmental projects	Ongoing	

* The implementation status is tracked in the ERC.