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3835 Steppe Conservation and Management

Brief description – A significant portion of the world’s remaining natural Pontian steppe habitat is found within the Central Asian nation of Kazakhstan. This enormous nation shelters five largely contiguous steppe ecological zones, i.e., forest steppe, meadow steppe, dry steppe, desertified steppe and steppe semi-desert, stretching some 160 million ha. all across the northern and central sections of the country and including some 123 million ha. of remaining ‘natural habitat.’ Kazakhstan’s steppe ecosystems support approximately 2,000 species of flora, including about 30 endemic species, along with unique floristic compositions. They also provide habitat for globally endangered species of steppe fauna, including nine of the 24 globally endangered mammal species occurring in the country. The major threat facing Kazakhstan’s steppe ecological zones involves habitat degradation associated with changes in ungulate populations and distributions and associated hunting pressures which have nearly wiped out the Saiga Antelope. Protected areas have a potentially significant, yet largely unrealized, role to play in eliminating these threats to steppe area biodiversity in Kazakhstan. For the four main steppe types (excluding forest steppe), only 1.7% of remaining natural steppe habitat is protected. The Government’s strategy for PA expansion until 2030 calls for reversing the current under-representation of steppe ecosystems in the PA system. The proposed long-term solution for biodiversity conservation in Kazakhstan’s steppe areas involves the development of a highly strategic, landscape-based approach to protected area expansion and management within the steppe zone. The solution relies on three key elements. The first of these is a system of various types of financially sustainable protected areas, ranging from permanent and fully staffed national parks to seasonally protected areas; from fully Government-administered areas to areas where local communities play a central role in management. Secondly, the solution depends on a high degree of integration of these protected areas with buffer zones, wildlife corridors and other areas of the broader landscape. This integration, which is based in practice on management tools such as information and knowledge management and wildlife corridors, is required to define and achieve landscape-level conservation goals. Finally, the solution depends on adequate capacities among a broad range of stakeholders to manage both the protected areas and key landscape areas, and in particular to utilize the management tools in question, i.e., protected areas, wildlife corridors, knowledge management systems, etc. The key barriers to the long-term solution are: (i) An emphasis on a traditional and overly complicated approach to PA expansion, which will not be sufficient to achieve steppe ecosystem conservation; (ii) Inadequate tools, practices and processes for landscape-level conservation management; (iii) Limited systemic, institutional and individual capacities for steppe conservation and management. Working with national and international partners, the project will achieve the following three outcomes to remove the barriers and make progress towards the long-term solution: (i) PA system of Kazakhstan contains representative samples of steppe ecosystem under various conservation management regimes and provides effective coverage of ecosystems and ecological processes; (ii) Tools for landscape-level steppe conservation planning and management are developed and implemented by key stakeholders; (iii) The systemic, institutional and individual capacity for steppe conservation in a wide productive landscape is strengthened.

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Acronyms

ACBK	Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan
ADCI	Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative
CACILM	Central Asia Countries Initiative for Land Management
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CFH	Committee of Forestry and Hunting of the Ministry of Agriculture (RoK)
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ENO	Estestvenno-nauchnoje obosnovanie (Scientific Background Report)
FZS	Frankfurt Zoological Society
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH
IBA	Important Bird Area
PA	Protected Area
PAS	Protected Area System
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
TEO	Tekhniko-ekonomicheskoye obosnovanie (Technical Economic Justification Report)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

SECTION I: Elaboration of the Narrative

PART I: Situation Analysis

1.1. Context and global significance

Environmental context

1. Steppes are grassland communities with little or no trees. Within the Palaearctic realm, two biogeographic provinces consist of steppe: the Mongolian-Manchurian steppe (2.6 million km²) and the Pontian steppe (1.9 million km²). The Pontian steppe province, which extends some 3,500 km from the lower reaches of the Danube River in the west to the Altai Mountains in the east with a width varying from 300-900 km, contains over 24% of the world's temperate grasslands.¹ A significant portion of the world's remaining natural Pontian steppe habitat is found within the Central Asian nation of Kazakhstan, which covers some 2.7 million km², or nearly the size of all of Western Europe. This enormous territory shelters five largely contiguous steppe ecological zones (see **Table 1**), which stretch some 160 million ha. all across the northern and central sections of Kazakhstan (see [Map 1](#)), or about 59% of the country's territory. These five zones, which support some 123 million ha. of remaining 'natural habitat,' are forest steppe,² meadow steppe, dry steppe, desertified steppe and steppe semi-desert.

2. Beginning with forest and meadow steppe in the north, the landscape becomes progressively dryer towards the south, eventually transforming into dry steppe, desertified steppe and steppe semi-desert. Forest steppe in northern Kazakhstan is characterized by forbs-feather grass steppes with islands or larger areas of trees. Mainly aspen-birch groves are typical for this zone. Further south, the trees disappear in the zone of the meadow steppe. The natural habitat here consists of a forbs and feather grass steppe, sometimes in combination with fescue, or bunch grass instead of feather grass. The most important aspect of this zone is the very fertile Chernozem soil, which provides large areas suitable for agriculture. The presence of these fertile soils is a key reason why natural areas of meadow steppe have been reduced by over 75% (see **Table 1**).

Table 1: Kazakhstan's main ecosystem types

Main ecosystem type	Total size (ha.)	Estimated remaining area of natural habitat
Forest steppe	7,683,000	1,000,000
Meadow steppe	18,157,000	3,000,000
Dry steppe	49,041,000	41,000,000
Desertified steppe	38,419,000	32,000,000
Steppe semi-desert	47,242,000	46,000,000
Desert	55,704,000	52,000,000
Mountains	40,520,000	35,000,000
Others (rivers, lakes, forests, solonchaks)	15,734,000	12,000,000
Totals	272,500,000	181,000,000

Source: Calculations based on GIS data of GEF-UNEP-WWF- «ECONET Central Asia»; estimation of natural area based on expert knowledge

3. In contrast, agricultural use of dry steppe further south is sharply restricted by less rain and less fertile Chestnut soils. The natural vegetation of different types of feather grass steppe in northern parts

¹ IUCN 1994, as quoted in Henwood, William D.

² Forest steppe, despite the name, is not generally considered as part of the steppe zone, but rather as an ecotone towards taiga. For this reason, and because it is relatively well protected compared with other steppe types, it is treated separately in much of the following discussion.

and fescue-feather grass steppe in the south, partly in complex with *Artemisia* communities and halophytic vegetation in depressions, is consequently still widely spread or regenerates on abandoned agricultural lands. Desertified steppe maintains an even higher percentage of natural habitat since agriculture has never been possible here. The only land-use is pasturing and hay-making due to limited rainfall and less fertile soils (e.g. Solonetz). This zone is characterized mainly by *Artemisia*, or short feather grass steppe, sometimes combined with fescue or replaced by areas of orach communities. Finally, the most southern steppe semi-desert is clearly dominated by *Artemisia* communities. A lot of psammophytic and halophytic species and some grasses and shrubs can be found here. Various different soil types occur together in a complex (Solonetz, Southern Chestnut soils, Solonchaks, Calcisols). Overall, *Artemisia* communities increase to the South, whereas grasses are higher and combined with more forbs northwards. In all zones, shrubs or even trees occur along rivers or on sandy territory. As noted, the frequency of trees increases from South to North. In some classifications, the northern parts of steppe are called tall-grassed steppe (meadow steppe, partly forest steppe), while the southern areas are known as short-grassed steppe (dry steppe, desertified steppe) and *Artemisia* steppe (steppe semi-desert).

4. Together, Kazakhstan's steppe ecosystems support approximately 2,000 species of flora, including about 30 endemic species, along with unique floristic compositions. Twenty main vegetation communities³ have been identified, of which eight are endemic, two are rare and five represent unique relict communities. These communities differ from Western Pontian steppes (the Black Sea region) as well as from those of the eastern, Mongolian steppes. For example, shrub steppes, based on *Caragana* and *Spiraea* have a unique structure found only in Kazakhstan. The country is also rich in bunch grass steppes holding umbelliferous silaus, dry steppes with xerophytes, desert shrub bunchgrass steppes and stony steppes characterized by rare and endemic petrophylic species. Relict steppes include meadow steppes with a set of mountain steppe species situated on tops of low mountain groups in the central parts of the country. Taken as a whole, the vegetation of Kazakhstan's steppes has no close analogue in Eurasia or elsewhere.⁴

5. Kazakhstan's diverse steppe ecosystems provide important habitat for globally endangered species of steppe fauna. Of the total 178 mammal species in Kazakhstan, 73 (41%) are found in steppe areas; this figure includes nine of the 24 globally endangered mammal species occurring in the country, i.e., Saiga Antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*), Kulan (*Equus hemionus*),⁵ Przewalski Horse (*Equus przewalskii*)⁶, Goitered Gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*), Desert Dormouse (*Selevinia betpakdalensis*), Steppe Pika (*Ochotona pumilla*), Kazakhstan Argali (*Ovis ammon collium*), Menzbier's marmot (*Marmota menzbieri*) and Palla's Cat (*Felis manul*).⁷ Also present are ecologically important predator species, such as the Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus*) and Corsac Fox (*Vulpes corsac*), most of which appear to be diminishing in number.

6. Of 488 bird species described for Kazakhstan, 336 (68.9%) are found in the steppe. This includes 21 of the 30 autochthonous endangered bird species. Fourteen of these threatened species are steppe breeding birds.⁸ The breeding grounds of globally threatened species of birds such as Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*), Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*), Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*), Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*), and Black-winged Pratincole (*Glareola nordmanni*) are almost fully located inside the steppe zone. In addition, the steppe lakes play an important role for nesting and roosting during the migration of

³ Rachkovskaya, E.I., Ogar, N.P., Marynich, O.V. 1999, Redkie pastitelnye soobshchestva stepej Kazakhstana i ikh okhrana. Stepnoj Buletin: Novosibirsk. 3-4, 1999. pages 41-46

⁴ Personal communication, Prof. Yekaterina Rachkovskaya, 16 July 2008.

⁵ Until recently, Przewalski horses, few in number, remained only on an island in the Aral Lake. However, together with Kulan, it was recently reintroduced into National Park Altyn Emel.

⁶ Przewalski horses were extirpated from their natural steppe habitats. Several Przewalski horses coming from source populations of zoos have been reintroduced into the National Park Altyn Emel. There are Governmental plans to extend this reintroduction projects for Przewalski horse and Kulan.

⁷ These include species categorized as either CR, EN and VU by the IUCN Red List 2007: <http://www.iucnredlist.org> 06.02.2008

⁸ IUCN Red List 2007: <http://www.iucnredlist.org> 06.02.2008, The Red Book of Kazakhstan 1996: <http://www.redbookkz.info>, 06.02.2008

many bird species, including endangered species like the Siberian Crane (*Grus leucogeranus*), Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*), Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*), Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*) and Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*). Other globally threatened bird species for which the steppe provides habitat are the Demoiselle Crane (*Anthropoides virgo*), Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*), Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), and Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*).

Protected area system: Current status and coverage

7. To protect this globally significant biodiversity, Kazakhstan has established a system of protected areas covering 22,121,641 ha., or 8.1% of the total area of the country. This includes five main categories of national-level protected areas, all of which are under the direct or indirect responsibility of the Committee on Forestry and Hunting (CFH). Of these five PA categories, the most important for nature conservation are the first three, all of which have administrative offices based in the vicinity of the PAs, as well as rangers ('inspectors') patrolling within the PAs. However, as shown in **Table 2**, these 'managed' PAs cover less than 5 million ha., or 1.8% of Kazakhstan's territory. The remaining areas, representing more than 75% of the PAS by area, do not have such management bodies and enjoy in practice only minimal protection. This means that expansion of the PAS, particularly in terms of increasing the number and area of actively managed PAs, remains an important task.

Table 2: Kazakhstan's Protected Area System, by Category

Type of protected area	Number of PAs in category	Area (ha)	% of total Kaz.	IUCN mgmt. category equiv.	Management authority
State Nature Reserves (Zapovedniks)	10	1,223,285	0.45	Ia	CFH
State National Nature Parks	10	1,905,877	0.70	II	CFH
State Nature Rezervats	3	1,703,678	0.62	II or Ib	CFH
Sub-total	23	4,832,840	1.77		
State Natural Sanctuaries (Zakazniks)	49	5,938,301	2.18	IV	CFH, PAs with status of juridical person
State Reserved Zones	5	11,350,500	4.17	IV	CFH, OkhotZooProm State Enterprise (operating under CFH)
Sub-total	54	17,288,801	6.35		
Total	77	22,121,641	8.12		

Source: Official list of protected areas from the government of Kazakhstan from November 2006 and information about newly established PAs.

8. In addition to this relatively low coverage in terms of managed areas, Kazakhstan's protected area system has striking gaps in ecological representation in four of the five categories of steppe ecosystems defined above. **Table 3** below presents protected area system coverage by ecological zone. The heavy line separates 'high coverage' types from low coverage ones. The former group, which includes forest steppe, 'other', desert and mountains, includes a total of 19.3 million protected hectares, giving this group a 19.3% rate of coverage of remaining natural habitat. In contrast, the second group, consisting of the four main steppe system types, has only 2.07 million hectares, giving it a 1.7% rate of coverage or remaining natural steppe habitat. As far as individual steppe ecosystem types, with the exception of meadow steppe, the PA system fails to protect more than 2.1% of remaining natural habitat of any steppe ecological zone. Even in the case of meadow steppe, the vast majority of which has been transformed by agriculture, only 2.5% of the overall ecological zone is currently protected. Desertified steppe exhibits the lowest level of coverage of the entire country at 0.4%.

Table 3: Protected area system coverage, by ecological zone

Main ecosystem type	Estimated remaining area of natural habitat	# protected areas *	# ha protected	Protected area, as % of remaining area of natural habitat **	Protected area, as % of area of overall ecological zone
Forest steppe	1,000,000	8	620,068	62.0	8.1
Others (rivers, lakes, forests, solonchaks)	12,000,000	34	2,336,645	19.5	14.8
Desert	52,000,000	12	9,837,990	18.9	17.7
Mountains	35,000,000	30	6,553,771	18.7	16.2
Meadow steppe	3,000,000	15	446,448	14.9	2.5
Steppe semi-desert	46,000,000	6	976,042	2.1	2.1
Dry steppe	41,000,000	16	481,689	1.2	1.0
Desertified steppe	32,000,000	13	165,781	0.5	0.4

* PAs often consist of different ecosystems and thereby might be counted more than once here.

** Calculations assume that PAs consist of 100% natural habitat.

Source: The area of PAs is based on calculations with GIS data of GEF-UNEP-WWF- «ECONET Central Asia»

9. One reason for the under-representation of steppe areas within the national protected area system is that the system's historic development was principally driven by a concern to conserve specific species and unique features, as opposed to having been planned to protect ecosystems and ecological processes. In addition, propaganda during the Soviet times emphasised that it was “modern” to convert every square meter of steppe to grain farming—even though this was visibly uneconomic to a large extent within these dry areas. Details regarding steppe area PAs are presented in **Table 4** below, which provides a breakdown of protected areas according to PA type and steppe ecological zone. As seen here, nearly 85% of PA coverage of steppe ecosystems is by two PA types: State Nature Rezervats (43%) and State Natural Sanctuaries (42%). In terms of number of PAs, three State Nature Rezervats and 22 State Natural Sanctuaries cover steppe ecosystems. Altogether, nine protected areas, covering 1.2 million ha. of steppe habitat, are directly managed, ‘juridical bodies.’⁹ This represents only a 0.8% rate of coverage of these four steppe ecosystem types by managed protected areas.

Table 4: Protected areas within the steppe ecological zone, by PA and ecosystem type

PA Type	# PAs	Total area (ha)	Est. target habitat coverage [ha]			
			Meadow steppe	Dry steppe	Desertified steppe	Steppe semi-desert
State Nature Reserves (Zapovedniks)	3	118,973	0	109,548	7,756	0
State National Nature Parks	3	192,068	172,594	18,587	887	0
State Nature Rezervats	3	885,028	3,211	143,630	66,899	671,288
State Natural Sanctuaries (Zakazniks)	22	872,835	270,643	209,924	90,239	302,029
State Reserved Zones	1	1,057	0	0	0	1,057
Totals	32	2,069,961	446,448	481,689	165,781	976,042

Source: Calculations based on GIS data of GEF-UNEP-WWF- «ECONET Central Asia»

⁹ See para. 11 above.

Policy context

10. The broader national policy context is set by the National Environmental Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Conception of Environmental Safety for 2004-2015, approved by Presidential Decree. With respect to protected areas management, the following programs have been approved:

- (i) the short-term Governmental Program of Development of Special Protected Natural Territories for 2007-2009, which is a part of the national “Concept of Development and Location of Special Protected Natural Territories of the Republic of Kazakhstan Until 2030” (latter endorsed by the GoK on 10 November 2000);
- (ii) the Strategic Plan “Ecology and Natural Resources”, which is an element of the long-term national “Kazakhstan-2030” Development Strategy;
- (iii) the Program on the Conservation and Rational Use of Water Resources and Fauna, and the Development of a Network of Protected Areas until 2010, which was adopted by the Government of Kazakhstan by governmental decree № 914 on October 8th, 2007. This program aims to conserve the country’s biodiversity, as well as its natural and cultural heritage through the development of a system of PAs within the republic.

11. The government of Kazakhstan has also approved the ‘transition to sustainable development’ concept, which concerns economic, social and environmental sustainability. This concept includes 12 parameters and 36 indicators. The 36 indicators include sectoral indicators as well as regional parameters, and also include specific indicators related to PA system expansion.

12. The main law regulating questions of planning, creation and management of protected areas is Law No. 175-III, “About Protected Areas” of 7 July 2006. According to this law, there are two main ‘categories’ of PAs: (i) PAs of National, or Republican importance, and (ii) PAs of local importance. In response to this law, and in order to conserve biodiversity across the country, the Government of Kazakhstan has established an extensive Protected Area System (PAS), which represents the cornerstone of its biodiversity conservation efforts. There are at least 14 different ‘types’ of Protected Areas, eight of which belong to the first category (PAs of national importance) and six of which fall within the category of PAs of local importance. However, PA types that fall in the second category, i.e., PAs of local importance, have for various reasons little if any conservation significance. In addition, three of the PA types within the first category, e.g., national monuments, are also of little importance for biodiversity conservation. This leaves five PA types which are the focus of the following analysis. The remaining five PA types may be grouped according to whether or not they are ‘juridical bodies’, i.e., are registered as legal entities having their own administrations (director, staff, etc.). This group includes the following three PA types:

- (i) *State Nature Reserves (Zapovedniks)*: Zapovedniks have the highest level of protection of any PA type. Special permission is required to enter a Zapovednik and visitor levels are strictly regulated based on scientific recommendations. Zapovedniks, like other PAs in this category, are required to adopt management plans. They are run by a Director, who is appointed by the Chairman of Committee on Forestry and Hunting (CFH), which is under the Ministry of Agriculture. The Director and other staff are civil servants under the overall umbrella of CFH. The administration includes departments for administration, science, conservation and, in some cases, ecotourism. Zapovednik rangers have the right to stop individuals believed to be in violation of conservation laws; the resulting reports are then submitted to the courts for further action.

- (ii) *State National Nature Parks*: These are similar to Zapovedniks in many ways, but differ as follows. They are more oriented towards tourism and recreational use and environmental education. In terms of zoning, they include ecological stabilization zones, touristic and recreation zones and zones of limited use.
- (iii) *State Nature Rezervats*: These include a core zone and a ‘buffer zone’, both of which are within the PA boundary. Core zones have the same strict rules as Zapovedniks. However, within buffer zones, various uses are allowed, including scientific, eco-tourism, education, non-commercial forestry, traditional land uses, measures for biodiversity and landscape restoration and tourism.

13. The second group consists of areas which are also legally established, but which are not ‘juridical bodies’ and which therefore lack management structures of their own. They therefore need to be managed directly by other administrative bodies, such as CFH, PAs which are juridical bodies, Okhotzoprom (which is under CFH), etc. They include:

- (i) *State Natural Sanctuaries (Zakazniks)*: These are selected according to one of seven criteria, which include hydrological, botanical and zoological importance. The establishment of zakazniks does not require the removal of land from its current uses, but instead may involve the introduction of regulations and restriction of uses which jeopardize the values for which the zakaznik was established. It is up to the oblast-level administration (akimat) to establish the regulatory regime and associated limits. For example, a zakaznik established due to its zoological importance may restrict or ban hunting within its boundaries. Zakazniks can be established for varying timeframes, as follows: (i) permanent, (ii) long-term (more than 10 years), (iii) short-term (less than 10 years). In principle, regulations promulgated by Zakazniks may operate on a seasonal basis, e.g., hunting can be restricted or banned during saiga calving seasons. According to a recently approved law, management of Zakazniks may be assigned to protected areas having a juridical status (see previous paragraph) or to the local Forestry Administration.
- (ii) *State Reserved Zones*: These are established as a first step in conservation of an area. Later on, reserved zones may be transformed into Zapovedniks, national parks or nature reserves. Like Zakazniks, existing land uses are not necessarily banned, but rather are regulated according to three management areas with each PA: (i) strict protection areas; (ii) semi-protected areas; (iii) regulated use areas. With the exception of the North Caspian Reserved Zone, which is managed by FHC, State Reserved Zones are all managed by Okhotzoprom.

14. According to the PA Law (175-III) and associated regulations,¹⁰ the process of creating or expanding any national-level PA works roughly as follows. The first step is preparation of a Scientific Background Report, or ‘ENO.’¹¹ The ENO includes ecological studies, baseline scientific description of the area, biological inventories and a geographical description. It should also include descriptions of human geography, e.g., population distribution, land use, etc. An ENO may be prepared directly by CFH or it may be prepared for them by an interested party, such as the Institute of Zoology, an NGO or another scientific organization. If prepared by another organization, CFH reviews the ENO and, if satisfied submits the document to the Ministry of Environment Protection (MEP), whose Department of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Licensing undertakes an environmental impact assessment of the proposal. This department issues an EIA report, which may or may not call for changes in the ENO. As soon as the ENO is cleared by the EIA Department, FHC can adopt the ENO.

¹⁰ See Order of the Chairman of the Committee of Forestry and Hunting No 67 of 15 February 2007, “About the statement of rules on development of drafts of natural scientific and technical economic substantiations on creation or expansion of protected areas.”

¹¹ ENO is short for ‘Estestvenno-nauchnoje obosnovanie.’

15. Once the ENO is completed and accepted, work can begin on a second report, the Technical Economic Justification Report, or ‘TEO.’¹² The TEO includes: (i) land use planning studies with detailed land-use maps and boundary delineations; (ii) land ownership maps; (iii) plans to negotiate with land-owners to reserve land and, where necessary, to buy-out lands, and; (iv) budgetary information. As with the ENO, FHC needs to clear the TEO before submitting it to MEP. Once MEP has cleared the TEO, CFH prepares a Draft Governmental Decree regarding establishment or extension of the PA which is submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister. From there, the Document is reviewed by several ministries, prior to being signed by the Prime Minister. Following signature by the latter, the creation or extension of the PA is announced in the Official Gazette.

Institutional context:

16. Two institutions have primary responsibility for conservation of biological diversity within Kazakhstan’s steppe zone and elsewhere. One is the Committee on Forestry and Hunting (CFH), which is one of several committees under the Ministry of Agriculture.¹³ At national level, CFH has a central unit, including deputies, head of departments and several experts. It also has oblast-level branches; however, its structure does not extend further to local levels. CFH is generally responsible for implementing national policy related to forestry, the protection and sustainable use of species and protected areas. It also has the responsibility to ensure the conservation of Kazakhstan’s biological diversity and ecosystem health, which includes the country’s steppe zones. CFH is also responsible for management of national-level protected areas. In 2000, CFH gained government approval for a long-term programme for protected areas expansion until 2030.¹⁴ This programme includes, as priority actions, the establishment of steppe PAs covering 2.9 million ha.¹⁵ Additional details are presented below under PAs. In addition to being responsible for management of protected areas, CFH is also responsible for wildlife management. In order to provide field-level protection, including mobile ranger teams, to Saiga and other species in the landscape areas, CFH set up a state enterprise known as ‘Okhotzooptom.’ Under the supervision of CFH, Okhotzooptom is responsible for the protection, monitoring and restoration of Red Data Book ungulates, including in particular Saiga, as well as for management of four of Kazakhstan’s State Reserved Zones.

17. There is also potential to promote steppe conservation outside of PAs by taking advantage of the system of hunting areas begun in 2004/2005. Hunting areas were made possible due to a new law, RK # 593-II “On conservation, restoration and use of wildlife”, dated 9 July 2004, which allows for privately contracted rangers to patrol privately owned steppe lands to control poaching and enforce hunting quotas. This means that some type of monitoring takes place in these types of management areas. To date, 633 hunting areas have been established, with another more than 700 identified as potential hunting areas. 243 million ha across the country deemed suitable for this type of management, of which 109 million ha have already been earmarked.

18. Given the significant wildlife and land management requirements associated with leasing of hunting areas, their establishment has the potential to aid in steppe conservation efforts; these areas represent tools of some potential importance for supporting steppe PA effectiveness. For example, hunting areas currently employ many times more rangers than do protected areas. Nevertheless, care must also be taken to ensure that hunting on these lands remain carefully regulated, with sustainable offtakes, careful monitoring, etc.

¹² TEO is short for ‘Tekhniko-ekonomicheskoye obosnovanie.’ It is worth noting that TEOs may only be prepared by companies that are licensed to handle officially classified cadastral maps. Not more than 10 such companies exist, only two of which have experience working with establishment of PAs.

¹³ Other Committees under the Ministry of Agriculture include the Committee of Fisheries and the Committee of Water Resources. Committees are led by a Chairman who reports to the Minister but who also has the right to issue his/her own ‘Orders’ on issues related to forestry and hunting, thus giving Committees a certain level of autonomy.

¹⁴ “Concept of Development and Location of Special Protected National Territories of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030 (endorsed by the GoK on 10 November 2000)

¹⁵ See above, “Protected Area System: Current Status and Expansion Plans.”

19. In addition to the policy and operational roles played by CFH, the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) has important policy and monitoring responsibilities. MEP is responsible for overall policy related to environmental management, including sustainable development. It is also responsible for co-ordination with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Finally, MEP is responsible for performing environmental impact assessments related to PA establishment and expansion.¹⁶The roles of other institutions involved in various aspects of steppe management are described in the stakeholders section.¹⁷

1.2. Threats, causes and impacts

20. The globally significant biodiversity of Kazakhstan's steppe areas has been significantly affected by human activities over the course of the past 60 years. During the 1950s and 1960s, Kazakhstan lost an area of natural Pontian grassland comparable to half the size of Spain due to ploughing.¹⁸ Conversion of steppe took place mainly in the more northern meadow and dry steppe areas, where large areas of habitat were lost or degraded. More recently, globally threatened species such as Saiga antelope have been hunted to near extirpation. While the kinds and levels of threats facing steppe biodiversity have changed somewhat over the years and in some cases have even diminished, steppe biodiversity remains weakened and under pressure. The intertwined threats and ecological impacts of persisting threats related to over-hunting, livestock rearing and other anthropogenic influences are discussed below.

21. Steppe ecosystems are strongly influenced by the presence of large ungulates and other herbivorous mammals. Moderate and spatially proportional grazing is essential for the stability of many steppe communities. Indeed, many steppe fauna and flora species that are now globally threatened or near threatened rely on grazing by ungulates to provide favourable habitat conditions. Dramatic shifts in grazing pressure—defined as either ‘over-grazing’ or ‘under-grazing’—can have important ecological implications. In the case of the Kazakh steppe, this ecological grazing balance was historically maintained by the Saiga antelope, along with other large herbivores such as the Kulan and the Przewalski Horse. Between 1600 and 1800, Saiga ranged across the entire steppe zone west to the Carpathians and the southern Bug and Prut rivers, including most of the forest steppe.¹⁹ Saiga populations were kept in check naturally by predators such as wolves, which helped to ensure the relatively stable and moderate levels of grazing pressure needed for steppe ecosystem maintenance. Following a period of decline in the 19th Century, Saiga populations began to regenerate. As recently as 1974, an estimated 1.2 million Saiga roamed the Kazakh steppe.²⁰

22. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, hunting pressures linked to demand for Saiga meat and horns ranged unchecked by any effective state controls. Impoverished rural populations seeking cash or protein, together with consumers of Saiga horn in Traditional Chinese Medicine, represented twin pillars of demand. The commercial value of the horns of a male Saiga antelope was extremely high for people in rural areas, making Saiga an attractive target for poachers. As a result, between 1994 and 2003, Kazakhstan's Saiga populations declined by some 97 per cent. Today, as few as 50,000 Saiga remain.²¹ Other ungulates, such as the Kulan and the Przewalski Horse, are close to extinction.

23. Even today, with wildlife populations struggling to recover, poaching remains a serious problem. More people have access to powerful machinery and weapons, improving access to vulnerable species. For example, snowmobiles are delivered upon request to hunting grounds, which severely compromises the resilience of Saiga antelope, wild boar and other animals against poaching. In summary, hunting both

¹⁶ See paras. 14-15 above.

¹⁷ See paras. 46-47 above.

¹⁸ See below under Threats.

¹⁹ Sokolov, Vladimir E. *Mammalian Species*, No. 38, Saiga tatarica (May 2, 1974) pp. 1-4

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Official saiga census, 2006.

threatens target species directly, while leading to broader, ecosystem-level impacts associated with sharply reduced levels of grazing.

24. Before considering these broader impacts, it is important to note the analogous role played by livestock in maintaining these ecosystems. To a certain extent, and if properly managed, some breeds of livestock can play a complementary role in steppe ecosystems to that of Saiga and other wild ungulates. Traditional patterns of Kazakh pastoralism involved seasonal migrations of herds and an associated nomadic way of life for pastoralist communities. Such movements helped to avoid overgrazing of specific locations, while ensuring adequate grazing needed to help maintain steppe grasslands and their characteristic species compositions. Even as Saiga populations were being decimated by overhunting, traditional pastoralist methods were being abandoned. This dual process led to dramatic shifts in grazing levels, with many areas across the steppe experiencing significant declines in grazing by wild ungulates and livestock while smaller areas, typically near what were now permanent human settlements, experienced excess grazing levels.

25. The drastic decline of Saiga, together with changes in livestock numbers and distributions, have contributed to substantial ecological changes across Kazakhstan's steppe zone. The lack of cyclic grazing has led to massive changes in vegetation, including invasion of weeds and an inhomogenous vegetative cover. Without grazing, old leaves of steppe plants are not removed before snowfall; as a result, accumulations of old plant material can impede the germination of spring plants. In addition, the increased height and projected cover of vegetation limits the distribution and amount of susliks—small, burrowing rodents that serve as the main food source for many predators (mammals and birds). This rapid degradation of natural habitat has contributed to a dramatic decrease in the population of globally significant steppe fauna and flora species, including several globally significant steppe-breeding birds. The Great Bustard, the world's heaviest flying bird, is now a vulnerable species with a prognosis of further decline. The population of the Sociable Lapwing decreased about 90% over the past 30 years, and is now classified by IUCN as critically endangered.

26. As noted above, overgrazing in specific areas of the steppe, e.g., near settlements, has had similarly negative effects. In the northern regions of the steppe zone (moderate dry and dry steppe), cattle numbers have exceeded the pasture loads of the limited grassland areas, and year-round grazing has caused the rapid degradation of vegetation cover resulting in soil compaction, which alters the soil's physical and chemical characteristics, and also contributes to the loss of some species. A further cause of habitat degradation and associated biodiversity loss is the cutting of trees, which are found mainly in relatively well-watered river valleys and sandy areas. The area and diversity of these wooded zones have decreased sharply in recent years. In the southern regions, tree cutting poses a significant threat to globally threatened species such as Imperial Eagles and Saker Falcons, because the distribution of these species is closely connected with islets of wooded vegetation. Whole groves of birch, aspen, willow bushes in river valleys, and rare woods of oleaster, chingil, and zhuzgun on the sandy massifs have been eliminated. In addition to trees, harvesting of plant material remains largely uncontrolled and in some cases harmful. In semi-desert regions, uprooting of one of the main fodder plants of Saiga antelope, sagebrush (*Atriplex cana*), during the autumn and early winter periods is becoming a noted practice. Tulip and ornamental flower collection, as well as medicinal plant collection for commercial purposes, is also an ongoing and uncontrolled practice.

27. Climate change represents an additional threat to the steppe ecosystems. Under different climate scenarios developed for Kazakhstan it is expected that grassland productivity will increase in the early vegetation period, but lower precipitation will negatively affect the second part of the growth period, when vegetation productivity may decrease anywhere from 30-90 percent.

1.3. Long-term solution and barriers to achieving the solution

28. The proposed **long-term solution** for biodiversity conservation in Kazakhstan's steppe areas involves the development of a highly strategic, landscape-based approach to protected area expansion and management within the steppe zone. The solution relies on three key elements. The first of these is a system of various types of financially sustainable protected areas, ranging from permanent and fully staffed national parks to seasonally protected areas; from fully Government-administered areas to areas where local communities play a central role in management. Secondly, the solution depends on a high degree of integration of these protected areas with buffer zones, wildlife corridors and other areas of the broader landscape. This integration, which is based in practice on management tools such as information and knowledge management and wildlife corridors, is required to define and achieve landscape-level conservation goals. Finally, the solution depends on adequate capacities among a broad range of stakeholders to manage both the protected areas and key landscape areas, and in particular to utilize the management tools in question, i.e., protected areas, wildlife corridors, knowledge management systems, etc. In terms of the threats defined above, the long-term solution would have several beneficial impacts, including the following: (i) reducing the threat of habitat loss and degradation on newly protected lands; (ii) providing a kind of 'floating cloud' of protection to migratory ungulates through temporary and other seasonal measures; and (iii) increasing buffering of, and connectivity among, protected areas by ensuring that agricultural and mining expansion are planned in ways that minimize impacts on steppe biodiversity values. The main barriers to implementing the above-described long-term solution for steppe conservation in Kazakhstan are described below:

29. Emphasis on a traditional and overly complicated approach to PA expansion, which will not be sufficient to achieve steppe ecosystem conservation. As outlined above, steppe ecosystems are currently under-represented within Kazakhstan's protected area system. Effective conservation of steppe ecosystem biodiversity will undoubtedly require a substantial increase in protected area coverage, which Government has already embarked upon. However, the baseline PA expansion effort is constrained by a number of barriers, which may be characterized overall as both conservative and complicated. One issue is that the effectiveness of the expanding system will depend not solely on the number of hectares protected but also on the *kinds* of protected areas being created. In particular, a combination of management regimes, including seasonal protected areas and co-managed, community-based approaches, along with more traditional forms of nature reserves, will be needed for effective and cost-effective steppe ecosystem conservation. This is partly due to the importance of migratory species such as Saiga for steppe ecosystem conservation. Unfortunately, the baseline approach is inflexible and lacks innovation in this respect. Until now, Government has continued to follow and adopt conservative, non-participatory approaches to PA establishment and management. There is a reluctance to invest in innovative interventions that deviate from the classic PA models applied thus far. Such conservative thinking is partly a reflection of the somewhat complicated budget approval process in the country: it is usually much harder to receive government financing for innovative and financially modest projects until they are tested and visible positive results can be seen and reported. In addition to the above, Government procedures for establishing or extending protected areas tend to be cumbersome and lengthy, which means there is added risk involved in attempting innovative approaches. Legal requirements underlying the PA expansion process require lengthy documentation which is identical regardless of PA type and which do not easily allow innovative mechanisms such as co-management and seasonal PAs. TEOs and ENOs, for example, are not designed in a way that maximizes their utility as tools for PA design. In this context, external funding can play an important role in demonstrating the feasibility of new approaches, which can then be mainstreamed into the regular funding process. There are additional barriers limiting the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of the current process of PA expansion. Ecological and representation gaps are not critically assessed prior to expansion decisions. As a result, the process of selecting new and expanded

PAs is not carefully prioritized. Perhaps most importantly, expansion decisions are not strategic with respect to broader, landscape level processes and objectives, but rather are ad-hoc in nature.

30. Inadequate tools, practices and processes for landscape-level conservation management: The specific challenges of steppe ecosystem conservation – including the vast, isolated areas and highly mobile species such as Saiga – call for a creative, multi-faceted set of conservation tools. These include tools for participation of local communities in protected area management as well as in landscape-level conservation. They include a detailed knowledge and firm understanding of ecosystem functions and dynamics, and an ability to disseminate this knowledge among protected area and other land managers. They include mechanisms for co-ordination and data sharing both within and across government agencies and departments. Despite the potential importance of the above, protected areas currently are managed largely in isolation from the surrounding landscapes. There is no cooperation and co-ordination between conservation agencies, development sectors and land-use planning authorities at national and oblast levels. Conservation agencies, stakeholders within development sectors, land use managers (e.g., of hunting areas) and land-use planning authorities have few interactions regarding conservation strategies and objectives. This absence of co-operation among agencies is particularly critical with respect to ecological information, given the important knowledge barriers facing managers of steppe ecosystems. There is little baseline research to identify the factors that enhance the recovery of deteriorated steppes after agricultural land lies fallow. Steppe ecology and interactions between habitats and species are not yet fully understood. This is a particularly important issue with respect to Saiga, an animal which migrates across large distances and whose conservation requires a combination of protected areas and landscape-level management. Reports indicate a massive decline of Himalayan and Black Vultures linked to the disappearance of Saiga, which both species had relied upon as a food. In addition, no baseline research currently is carried out to identify the factors that enhance recovery of deteriorated steppe after agricultural land lies fallow. Better understanding of these issues would improve and support the development of adequate conservation measures for steppe habitat. Nevertheless, data exchanges remain limited. As a result, landscape level conservation goals can scarcely be defined, much less achieved, across Kazakhstan's vast steppe areas. To the extent that such goals are pursued, a species-specific approach focusing, e.g., on Saiga protection, is generally the one taken. Thus, the tools needed for effective landscape-level biodiversity conservation are inadequately developed.

31. Limited systemic, institutional and individual capacities for steppe conservation and management The third barrier preventing the emergence of the preferred long-term solution is the limited level of capacities at systemic, institutional and individual levels for steppe conservation and management. The limited capacities of the protected area system within the steppe zone, combined with the nearly non-existent conservation capacities within agencies responsible for land management across this same landscape, are additional, important barriers to conservation. Once PAs are legally established, capacity shortfalls have important consequences for their functionality and effectiveness. This situation becomes even more difficult in a context of rapid PA system expansion, where it may become increasingly difficult to identify adequate numbers of qualified personnel. The challenge for the protected area system in particular is to manage a process of expansion while simultaneously raising the standard and capacities of existing PAs. Organizational structures, staffing standards, financial capacities—including capacities for business planning—are all important short-comings impinging on conservation governance. For example, limited capacities are currently preventing effective enforcement, or even clear understanding, of existing legislation and associated regulations. Limited capacities and awareness on the part of government officials and other stakeholders of alternative PA models are also preventing the emergence of alternative protected area models described above. Capacities are also needed to define, and manage efforts to achieve, broader, landscape-level conservation goals. PAs can play a key role in achieving such goals, but this requires a more macro-level and strategic outlook which at present is lacking. Overall, given the importance of landscape-level actions, limited capacities of various landscape-level actors, including local government officials, local resource users, become critical constraints. Raising capacities and awareness among these groups can therefore represent a useful investment in PA system sustainability. Finally, a

limited understanding of the economic value of steppe ecosystems – even among experts – restricts the ability of proponents to develop convincing arguments in favor of conservation. This is particularly important with respect to agricultural development, in the sense that PA expansion plans may come into conflict with potential agricultural expansion plans. In such cases, there are few yardsticks available for weighing various options, nor processes or fora in which alternatives can be discussed and consensus reached.

1.4. Stakeholder analysis

32. At the national level, the project will implicate multiple and diverse institutions. Their current and expected roles are defined as follows:

Table 5. Stakeholders involved in the project

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) including Committees of Forestry and Hunting (CFH) and of Water Resources (CWR) and Okhotzooptom State Enterprise (operated under CFH):	Makes recommendations, develops legislation, approves studies, manages PAs, and cooperates internationally. It has a widespread mandate, and its activities are not restricted to PAs. The Ministry of Agriculture will be involved in the joint development of steppe conservation initiatives, and will also play a role in the development of sustainable use alternatives. Key units include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Committee of Forestry and Hunting, its territorial organs in Akmola, Aktyubinsk, Kostanai, Karaganda, Pavlodar and East Kazakhstan areas. (ii) Okhotzooptom is responsible for management of four State Reserved Zones and conservation of rare and threatened species of wild ungulates and saiga. Implements the State programme “The Programme for Conservation and Restoration of Rare and Threatened Species of Wild Ungulates and Saiga 2005 – 2007”. (iii) Committee of Water Resources and its territorial organizations (basically Irtysh, Ishim, Nura-Sarysu and Tobol-Torgai basin water managements). This Committee is responsible for management of water resources, which are a critical natural resource in dry ecosystems such as steppe and semi-desert. Many wetlands are artificial (including ones in ITZ area) and it is important to maintain adequate water levels in those wetlands. (iv) The management authorities for Korgaldgyn and Naurzum nature reserves, which are the two existing State Nature Reserves in the steppe ecozone.
Ministry of Environment Protection:	Current role of the Ministry of Environment Protection (MEP) is to develop state policies and programs on environmental conservation and sustainable development, and to coordinate with the secretary of the CBD convention. The Ministry of Environment will contribute to the project by making joint decisions on steppe conservation activities and by linking steppe conservation actions with Kazakhstan’s commitments to international conventions. Kazakhstan is a signatory to 22 international nature protection conventions, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the RAMSAR Convention, the Bonn Convention (having also signed a MoU concerning the

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
	protection of Saiga along with Uzbekistan and Mongolia), and CITES. Also MEP and Oblast branches of MEP are responsible for Environmental impact assessments, which are needed for any of the planned activities related to conservation or use of nature resources.
Agency for Land Resources Management:	At national level, the Agency for Land Resources Management is responsible for development and implementation of state policy and programmes on land use planning and land management, geodesies and cartography. Oblast branches of the Agency for Land Resources Management are responsible for key decisions related to zoning and allocation of land use permits for agriculture, mining, etc at oblast level.
Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning:	Approves national budgets, develops the country's economic sectors, and promotes the effective realization of social and economic development priorities. The Ministry of Economics will consult and recommend economic incentives for conserving steppe ecosystems, and will provide financial advice and monitoring of investment projects related to steppe conservation.
Oblast Akimat	Responsible for establishing and management of PA of local importance. Allocation of land for planned PA of republican importance has to be done by oblast akimats.
Rayon Akimat	Rayon akimats have to agree on allocation of land for planned PA of republican and local importance.
Village Akimat	Play important role for allocation of lands for land users and for sustainable land management.
Hydrometeorological Centre	Research centre that will participate in consultations, discussions, and joint decision-making related to the degradation of steppe ecosystems connected to climate change.
Ministry of Education and Sciences:	Conducts research on all aspects of the natural environment and on the sustainable use of the steppe zone. The Ministry of Education and Sciences will play a scientific advisory role in the project.
Scientific and production associations (non-government research and analytical center "Laboratory of Wild Nature"; Ecomuseum Association, Ecomuseum BioNet Association	Work with local NGOs communities to conserve and restore biodiversity in selected locations. Promote the use of biodiversity friendly alternative energy sources. Research and biodiversity conservation activities. Support PA operations, provide expert assistance to PA staff. Actively engage students in biodiversity conservation work within PAs and outside their territories
ACBK	Currently ACBK is the largest conservation NGO in Kazakhstan and runs several conservation programmes and projects. These include programmes for Identification and conservation of IBA in Kazakhstan, as well as the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative. It is planned that ACBK will be executing Outcome 2 of the project as well as other outputs related to in-situ conservation activities and developing of PA system.
RSPB	Currently RSPB, in cooperation with ACBK, is developing an IBA programme for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. RSPB is willing to support IBA related activities within project territory.
Frankfurt Zoological Society	Partner of the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative
WWF	Partner of the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative
GTZ	Currently GTZ is starting a project called "Sustainable Use of Natural

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
	Resources and Conservation of Biodiversity in Central Asia.” GTZ will be the partner organization for assisting on developing of new methods for encouraging community-level participation on wildlife management and landscape-level conservation mechanisms.

33. At the local level, there is potential for the involvement of stakeholders on the rural district, rayon, and oblast levels in steppe conservation. This approach has been demonstrated in Korgalzhyn, where a 4-5 month process ensured the inclusion of all agencies in the decision to expand the PA. This type of approach will foster a sense of inclusion in the decision-making process. Once approval to expand is received at the oblast level, then expansion activities can take effect.

1.5. Baseline analysis

34. The main sources of baseline support for improved management and conservation of steppe areas may be summarized as follows:

35. Government and civil society: Major elements include the following: (i) CFH is implementing its current PA expansion plan and operating an existing set of steppe PAs. (ii) Okhotzoprom is working to monitor and conserve saiga populations across the landscape. (iii) Hunting areas are being established and managed. (iv) Oblast-level administrations are engaged in land use planning exercises.

36. The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative (ADCI): Since 2006, an important effort has been underway which, like the present project, relies a combination of protected area expansion and landscape level management to conserve saiga and other steppe-related biodiversity. This effort is known as the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative (ADCI). ADCI covers a 55 million km² area which approximates the traditional migration route of the so-called Betpak-Dala herd of saiga, historically the world’s largest saiga antelope population. The area also includes the Turgai lowlands, which represent a major migration corridor on the Central Asian flyway and includes many large and mostly untouched wetlands. An estimated ten to fifteen million birds migrate annually through this flyway.

37. Germany’s Bundesministerium fur Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ): BMZ has approved and is currently finalizing its strategy for a \$3 million project titled “Sustainable Use of Wildlife and Conservation of Biodiversity in Central Asia: Kazakhstan & Tadjikistan.” This project will be implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ). Several elements of this project will support enhanced landscape-level management of Kazakhstan’s steppe areas.

38. The baseline support identified above has been grouped according to the project’s three main areas of intervention and is described in greater detail below.

Establishing new protected areas

39. In 2000, Kazakhstan adopted a strategy for PA system expansion until the year 2030, which included a call for expanding the area of zapovedniks and national parks to cover 3% of national territory.²² In developing the strategy, the Government conducted a series of feasibility studies and analyses on the integration of steppe ecosystems into the national protected area system, which highlighted the fact –discussed in detail above – that steppe areas were heavily under-represented within the country’s protected area system (PAS). As a result, the strategy lists as a priority action the establishment of steppe PAs covering 2.9 million ha. Since 2008, protected area planning has been conducted in 3-year programmes. Under the first such phase (2008 – 2010), Government intends to

²² Concept on development of Protected Areas in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030. Decree of the Government of Kazakhstan # 1692 from 10.11.2000

establish nine new PAs covering 1.96 million ha while extending nine other PAs by a total of 722,000 ha. This will include establishing two new steppe region PAs (Altyn Dala State Nature Rezervat - 489,774 ha, and Buiratau State National Nature Park – 142,934 ha) and expanding two existing PAs (Korgalzhyn State Nature Reserve (Zapovednik) – 284,208 ha and Karkaralinsk State National Nature Park – 65,248 ha) to include steppe ecosystems.²³ Altogether, an estimated 860,000 ha of steppe ecosystems will be added during this three-year phase, with additional areas expected to follow in the period 2011-2013.²⁴ Thus, the Government of Kazakhstan is investing considerable financial resources and effort into the extension of the protected area system to improve coverage of steppe ecosystems. This programme has the potential to generate substantial global benefits through greatly increased representation of steppe ecosystems within the PAS.

Table 6: Current Status of PA Expansion Programme for the steppe ecozone

Protected area	Establishment or expansion?	Area being Added (ha)	Main ecosystem types	Status and timing
Karkaralinsk State National Nature Park	Expansion	65,248 ha: Bakty area (12,042 ha); Beldeutas (15,477 ha); Konyrtemirshi (37,729 ha)	Low mountain meadow steppe, dry steppe, forest	Draft ENO prepared and submitted to CFH, Draft decree on establishment of the State National Nature Park to be submitted to the Government
Buiratau State National Nature Park	Establishment	142,934 ha (of which 45,500 ha already protected as 3 small PAs (Zakazniks))	Dry steppe	ENO submitted to CFH, Draft decree on establishment of the State National Nature Park to be submitted to the Government
Korgalzhyn State Nature Reserve	Expansion	284,208 ha	Moderately dry, dry and desertified steppe, wetlands	Draft decree on expansion to be submitted to the Government
State Nature Rezervat “Altyn Dala”	Establishment	489,774 ha (of which 51,200 ha already protected as a Zakaznik)	Desertified steppe, dry steppe, lakes	ENO passed the EIA and now TEO preparation will soon be initialised

40. ACBK is an important partner for CFH in PA expansion work within the ADCI area. Its objective is the development of a representative set of PAs across the ADCI landscape. This effort has focused first on the establishment of the Altyn Dala State Nature Rezervat, which covers 500,000 ha, or about 1% of the ADCI landscape. The area is expected to be officially designated by end of 2009. ACBK, in cooperation with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), is also involved in PA identification work across the broader steppe zones. RSPB has been acting as a supporting partner for ACBK since 2004 and in March 2008 decided to extend this support to a long-term Country Programme.²⁵ During this period, and as part of a regional RSPB effort that also covers Uzbekistan and

²³ A 90,336 ha. extension to a fifth PA, Bayanaul State National Nature Park, was legally completed in the context of GEF project preparation in 2008.

²⁴ This is slightly less than the total combined expanded area since some other ecosystem types, e.g., wetlands, are found at the sites.

²⁵ A Country-Programme provides BirdLife partner organisations such as ACBK with stable core financial support but also with constant technical support (project development and implementation, research support etc.).

Turkmenistan, RSBP/ACBK efforts have led to the identification of 121 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Kazakhstan, covering almost 14.9 million hectares. Many of these IBAs are found within the steppe zone. This effort has created an important set of baseline information on bird and habitat status, as well as threats and other wildlife, for sites across the steppe, which is being taken into account in decisions on protected area expansion.

Landscape-level management and planning

41. Outside of the system of steppe PAs, in corridor and buffer zone areas of key importance to PA system sustainability and effectiveness, several types of activities are underway aimed at improving conservation management. These include: (i) data gathering and research; (ii) land use and wildlife management. Details of baseline activities in both of these areas are provided below.

(i) Data gathering and research

42. A limited amount of baseline data gathering and research efforts are underway. These include ... Improved scientific understanding of dryland ecosystems (co-operation with scientific institutions domestic and int'l [incl. University of Greifswald, Imperial College of London, University of Karaganda, Institutes of Zoology, Geography and Botany, Almaty; monitoring focused on key species, esp. saiga, wolves, ungulates, steppe eagle, etc.).GTZ will support the introduction of a tool for using wildlife data and information for decision-making related to land use management planning. This would involve support for the development of an information center that would assemble and analyse biodiversity-related data and use it to develop maps and other guidance for decision-makers involved in land use planning. Under the baseline, this system will focus first on large fauna within the ADCI pilot area.

(ii) Land use and wildlife management, including hunting areas

Actions implemented by Okhotzooptom aimed at saiga conservation represent a key element of baseline activities. Since 2003 every year Okhotzooptom in cooperation with Institute of Zoology conducts air-census of Saiga for monitoring purposes. Okhotzooptom implements State Programme for Conservation and Restoration of Rare and Threatened Species of Wild Ungulates and Saiga. Air-census of Saiga and other endangered ungulates and anti-poaching activities are components of this state programme.

43. Government is also supporting efforts aimed at re-introduction of several species that have either been extirpated, or nearly so, from the wild. “The Programme for Conservation and Restoration of Rare and Threatened Species of Wild Ungulates and Saiga 2005 – 2007” identifies a range of priority actions to protect rare ungulate species, such as the Bukhara Deer, Goitered Gazelle, Wild sheep, Kulan and Saiga. In 2004–2005, Przewalski horses were reintroduced to Altyn-Emel State National Natural Park. The reintroduced group is intended to become a source population for further reintroduction projects in other areas of Kazakhstan. More recently, in 2007, 35 Kulans from the Altyn Emel State National Natural Park were moved to Andasaijskij Zakaznik. Reintroduction of Kulan and Przewalski horses is also planned by ADCI (part of the logframe 2006 – 2016) in the ADCI project area, but there is neither a timeframe nor a budget so far for this. In 2007, a follow up wildlife management programme was approved for the period 2008-2010.²⁶ This programme is focusing, *inter alia*, on stabilizing the populations of Bukhara deer, Goitered Gazelle, Wild sheep and Kulan.

44. Landscape level wildlife conservation is also among the objectives of the system of hunting areas established in recent years. Hunting areas were made possible due to a change in legislation,²⁷ which allows for privately contracted rangers to patrol privately owned steppe lands to control poaching and enforce hunting quotas. This means that some type of monitoring takes place in these areas. To date, 633 hunting areas have been established, with another more than 700 identified as potential hunting areas. 243

²⁶ These efforts were contained within the “Programme for the conservation and sustainable use of aquatic resources, wildlife and the extension of a network of specially protected natural areas until 2010.”

²⁷ Law of RK # 593-II “On conservation, restoration and use of wildlife” dated 9 July 2004

million ha across the country deemed suitable for this type of management, of which 109 million ha have already been earmarked.. Given the significant wildlife and land management requirements associated with leasing of hunting areas, their establishment has the potential to aid in steppe conservation efforts; these areas represent tools of some potential importance for supporting steppe PA effectiveness. For example, hunting areas currently employ many times more rangers than do protected areas. Nevertheless, care must also be taken to ensure that hunting on these lands remain carefully regulated, with sustainable offtakes, careful monitoring, etc.

45. External donor support is also being provided for wildlife management within the steppe ecological zones. The GTZ project plans to build the wildlife management capacities of CFH, including its ability to oversee a decentralized wildlife management system involving the tendering of hunting concessions at oblast and other local levels. Performance-based quota setting, based on criteria for good performance in concession management, such as biodiversity, will be put into effect. GTZ will also support improving the existing saiga monitoring and management system, in co-operation with ACBK. Support will involve the development and testing of benefit sharing mechanisms related to wildlife such as community-based approaches. This will include awareness raising, testing and development of wildlife management approaches in two wildlife management areas, which are likely to be hunting areas, e.g., a private concession area and a hunting association property. These activities are expected to be located within the ADCI pilot area, i.e., the Betpak-Dala saiga population area, possibly in Karagandinskaya Oblast. Experiences from this demonstration will feed into the policy development process, which will be moving forward in tandem.

46. GTZ is also supporting: (i) revisions to the sustainable wildlife management policy and associated governance framework, to take advantage of the new law on hunting concessions in Kazakhstan. Outputs include a revised conservation financing mechanism, a revised legal framework and a revised institutional framework; (ii) public awareness raising and environmental education (to be implemented by ACBK); (iii) transboundary co-operation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for saiga conservation on the Ustyurt plateau; (iv) development of financing mechanisms for sustainable wildlife management: discussions with oil sector already started – to get the environmental charges paid by businesses into conservation.

Building capacities for PA management

47. As protected areas are legally established, the next important task becomes building up their staffing and capacities. Government of course takes the lead in this area, by identifying and recruiting PA staff, including managers and rangers. Capacities are also raised via investment budgets to create PA infrastructure, etc. Of course not only new PAs, but also existing PAs, require capacity building. PA system capacity-building work has been supported in recent years by UNDP/GEF, including efforts supported by the Altai Sayan and Wetlands projects to build capacities of national-level PA staff.

48. The goal of ADCI is to establish a network of PAs in the ADCI area. Currently, ADCI supports the establishment of the State Nature Reservat Altyn Dala. As ADCI partner,,GTZ will support landscape-level management through national-level support to CFH for management of hunting areas.

49. The efforts described above will serve as baseline co-financing for the present project and will be closely linked to the complementary GEF support described in Part II below. Together, these efforts will form a joint programme for steppe conservation and management in Kazakhstan.

Part II: Strategy

2.1. Project Rationale and Policy Conformity

Fit with the GEF Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programme

50. The project is fully consistent with the draft GEF Biodiversity Strategy: Strategic Objective 1 - Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Areas, Strategic Program 3 on Strengthening Terrestrial PA networks, as it will: (i) address the gaps in the national PA system coverage by including representative samples of a globally threatened ecoregion (the steppe); (ii) promote a landscape level conservation and management system for steppe conservation covering a wide range of conservation arrangements from traditional protected areas to co-managed protected areas and conservation compatible land-uses, and; (iii) build systemic, institutional and individual capacity for improving management effectiveness. While fundamentally a biodiversity initiative, particularly given its goal and its focus on strengthening the national PAS, the project does have a significant point of intersection with the land degradation focal area. Steppes are critical areas for land degradation and limiting degradation within corridors, buffer zones and other landscape areas is an important element of steppe biodiversity conservation strategies. It is in recognition of this fact that the project emphasises landscape management as a key tool for protected area sustainability. By working closely with efforts focused on land degradation, such as the CACILM (Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management) project, the present project will be able to identify and take advantage of important synergies with the land degradation focal area.

Rationale and summary of GEF Alternative

51. The broad project area consists of Kazakhstan's steppe region, consisting of dry steppe, desertified steppe and steppe semi-desert ecological zones, which together cover 134 million ha., or nearly half of the national territory. An estimated 88% of this area remains as natural habitat (see **Table 1** above). At present, the area is significantly under-represented in terms of protected areas, with only 1.62 million ha., or 1.4% of protected area coverage (see **Table 3** above). If we consider only those PAs having juridical bodies, and thus some form of active management, these figures fall to 1.02 million ha and 0.9% respectively. There is thus a clear need to address the substantial under-representation of the above three steppe ecological zones within the national protected area system. However, in a country as large as Kazakhstan, where highly migratory species are important targets for conservation, it is equally important for any PA expansion programme to be fully integrated with processes and developments across the broader landscape. Finally, it is essential that PA expansion is not merely a legal (paper) exercise, but that on-the-ground capacities are established as part of the process. As discussed above, a number of barriers are serving to limit progress in each of these areas.

52. Support for removing barriers to effective progress within the above three thematic areas – expansion, integration and capacities – constitutes the essential rationale for the present project and forms the basis for its three outcomes. In order to achieve these outcomes, GEF has joined in the partnership with the Government of Kazakhstan, GTZ, ACBK (a leading national conservation NGO), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB). These organizations are already collaborating on the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative (ADCI), which the present effort both encompasses and goes beyond.²⁸ The role of ACBK will be particularly important to this overall partnership. As the primary national NGO in steppe area conservation and support to protected area management and expansion, ACBK is already playing a key role working with government and international donors under the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative (ADCI). In the case of GEF-funded support, ACBK will be fully responsible for implementation of all project activities taking place within the ADCI demonstration area, of which the Irgiz-Turgay-Zhylanshyk demonstration site is an important part. This includes all of Outcome 2 and Output 3.5, together with portions of remaining outcomes / outputs, as and where they relate to the ADCI area.²⁹

53. Through a series of closely co-ordinated and complementary actions, the above partnership will demonstrate two inter-linked processes – PA expansion and integration of that expansion process with

²⁸ See Section D below for additional details regarding ADCI and its relationship to the GEF support.

²⁹ The UNDP Project Document contains additional details of ACBK responsibilities with respect to specific project outputs.

broader landscape-level elements – while supporting both demonstrations through an integrated capacity building component. These demonstrations, which are being supported under Outcomes 1 and 2, will be mutually supportive and will intersect in important ways. For example, the current three-year PA expansion programme includes the establishment of a major new protected area within the demonstration area to be supported under Outcome 2. Likewise, it is expected that the next (2011-2013) expansion programme will include support for one or more new PAs within this same area. Ongoing PA expansion in this demonstration area will both facilitate, and be enabled by, the landscape-level actions being demonstrated under Outcome 2. Likewise, landscape work being done under Outcome 2 will later inform PA expansion and management efforts within other areas of the steppe region where multiple PAs, migratory species, etc., are found. The project's outcomes and outputs are described below.

54. The above demonstrations, which are being supported under Outcomes 1 and 2, will be mutually supportive and will intersect in important ways. For example, the current three-year PA expansion programme includes the establishment of a major new protected area within the Altyn Dala area. Likewise, it is expected that the next (2011-2013) expansion programme will include support for one or more new PAs within the area. Ongoing PA expansion in this demonstration area will both facilitate, and be enabled by, the landscape-level actions being demonstrated at Altyn Dala under Outcome 2. Likewise, landscape work being done under Outcome 2 will later inform PA expansion and management efforts within other areas of the steppe region where multiple PAs, migratory species, etc., are found.

55. By the end of the project, efforts to conserve biodiversity within Kazakhstan's steppe region will have been strengthened in a number of important ways. The country's protected area system will have been expanded in a manner that eliminates the current, dramatic under-representation of Kazakhstan's main steppe ecological zones. Initial stages of protected area expansion within the steppe region will have been based on a careful process of prioritization, and a framework will be in place to ensure that subsequent stages of expansion follow a similar process. A landscape-level approach to protected area expansion and management will have been demonstrated at the Altyn Dala area, and will be available for replication and adaptation to other corners of Kazakhstan's vast steppe zone or to other ecological zones within the country. Finally, a system for ecological monitoring and knowledge management will have been developed and will be available for expansion to other parts of the country.

2.2. Project Goal, Objective, Outcomes and Outputs/activities

56. The project goal is to conserve the globally significant steppe biodiversity of Kazakhstan. The objective is to expand the protected areas system of Kazakhstan to ensure an improved coverage of steppe ecosystems. The project will demonstrate an ecologically representative landscape level conservation management system for Kazakhstan's steppe which will include a network of different categories of protected areas; the system will ensure the best possible connectivity within a functional landscape and will take into account both patterns and processes. The protected areas will be designated as nodes within a network of continental corridors where a range of conservation compatible land-uses are employed, will serve as stepping stones for moving populations and will provide areas for temporary recovery of species. This will require a significant shift in spatial planning with a focus on facilitating species movement and ecosystem processes across the landscape. Mechanisms and instruments will be developed to improve conservation management in steppe protected areas, buffer zones and in corridors between PAs and to better link protected areas with the wider productive landscape. The corridors will have special management objectives following seasonal migration, ranging from strict protection to sustainable use.

57. As outlined above, the project will consist of three mutually supportive outcomes. Under **Outcome 1**, GEF support will strengthen the Government's planned programme to expand the PAS within the steppe ecological zones. **Outcome 2** will support landscape-level efforts aimed at ensuring integration of steppe ecological zone PAs into a supportive matrix of surrounding land use management. **Outcome 3** will involve building capacities of institutional and individual stakeholders involved with PA

management, as well as those having relevant responsibilities within the broader steppe landscape, to manage a necessary range of conservation tools and systems. Project outcomes and outputs are described below.

Outcome 1 - PA system of Kazakhstan contains representative samples of steppe ecosystem under various conservation management regimes and provides effective coverage of ecosystems and ecological processes

58. In Kazakhstan, Government financing programmes for protected areas operate in three-year cycles, which will be referred to herein as Stage I, Stage II, etc. Under Outcome 1, the project will support the development and implementation of the steppe ecosystem components of the Stage I and Stage II expansion cycles, while laying the groundwork for Stage III and beyond. The project will eliminate barriers and help to create sustainable mechanisms needed to ensure the success of the steppe zone and national PA expansion processes over the longer-term. Altogether, through support to Stages I and II, this Outcome will enable the expansion of Kazakhstan's protected area system within the steppe ecological zones from present levels of 1.62 million ha. (1.2%) to at least 2.88 million ha. (2.1%).³⁰ Outputs are as follows:

59. Output 1.1: Gazettement of two new and two expanded steppe zone PAs: Under this output, support will be provided to the Stage I expansion (2008-2010). Two new steppe zone PAs (Altyn Dala State Nature Rezervat - 489,774 ha, and Buiratau State National Nature Park - 142,934 ha) will be established and two existing PAs (Korgalzhyn State Nature Reserve [Zapovednik] - 284,208 ha and Karkaralinsk State National Nature Park - 65,248 ha) will be expanded to include steppe ecosystems.³¹ Legal establishment efforts at each area will revolve around the preparation and adoption of two documents: a Scientific Background Report, or 'ENO' and a Technical Economic Background Report, or 'TEO'.³² Completion and adoption of these reports will be followed by the official gazettement announcements. Altogether, an estimated 860,000 ha of steppe ecosystems will be added during this Stage I expansion, which will increase PA system coverage within the steppe region by approximately 0.6%. Government, together with ACBK and partners in the Altyn Dala area, are fully co-financing this output.

60. Output 1.2: Stage II steppe PA expansion plan, with associated legal and regulatory changes: In 2009-10, Stage II of the PA expansion programme will be formulated, presenting a major opportunity to insert new and innovative thinking, based on best international practices, into the PA expansion strategy. Work will begin with a comprehensive assessment of the existing PA establishment process and its implications for PA expansion within the steppe region. Lessons will be drawn from the ongoing Stage I steppe PA expansion process. Key aspects of the process, such as the contents and methodology of TEOs and ENOs, will be assessed and revisions proposed. Legal and regulatory barriers shown to be affecting the speed and flexibility of the expansion process will be identified and alternatives proposed. The Stage II design will also carefully consider the need for multiple PA types – including alternative institutional models – to work in concert to help achieve steppe landscape-level conservation goals. Based on these assessments, a proposed set of reforms to the PA law will be developed, aimed at streamlining the PA establishment process and eliminating barriers to co-management and other alternative PA models.³³ Design of the Stage II expansion plan will also depend on a detailed gaps analysis, which will assess both ecological and representation gaps under the baseline PA system and help to identify cost-effective opportunities for closing them. Finally, the design will be informed by landscape-level information being

³⁰ These are minimum figures only. Refined targets will be developed during the formulation of the 2nd stage expansion plan.

³¹ The third PA extension to the Bayanaul State National Nature Park (90,336 ha, of which 60,000 ha. was previously designated as a State Natural Sanctuary) was legally completed in the context of this project's preparation in 2008.

³² ENO is short for 'Estestvenno-nauchnoje obosnovanie' and TEO is short for 'Tekhniko-ekonomicheskoye obosnovanie.'

³³ It is recognized that some of these reforms – particularly those requiring legal changes – may not be achieved in time to affect the Stage II expansion process, the strategy for which will be designed with this practical reality in mind. Some longer-term changes will thus be expected to impact mainly on Phase III and beyond.

developed under Outcome 2. Based on the above inputs, CFH will finalize its proposal for Stage II (2011-2013) PA expansion, including locations, types and areas of new PAs.

61. Output 1.3: At least one new PA gazetted, two PAs expanded and 500,000 ha of steppe ecosystems covered within the steppe ecological zones under second stage of PA expansion plan (2011-2013): Together with its partners, GEF will support implementation of the Stage II PA expansion plan. This will include support for the legal establishment of one new PA and the extension of two existing PAs within the steppe region. In supporting the preparation of key documentation for legal establishment, namely TEOs and ENOs, GEF will be speeding the process as well as bringing international expertise to bear. This will also provide an opportunity to test out some of the changes and additions to TEOs and ENOs identified under Output 1.1, particularly in cases where these do not depend on legal changes which may not yet have taken effect. The exact locations and types of support to legal establishment will depend on the details of the second 3-year expansion plan. However, the plan is expected to include PAs both within and outside of the Altyn Dala area, where landscape-level work is being done under Outcome 2. Together with co-financing, it is expected that implementation of Stage II will result in a minimum 1 million ha. increase in protected area coverage within the steppe region by the time of GEF project completion.

62. Output 1.4: Long-term framework for steppe PA expansion: In the final year of project implementation, as the second stage of PA expansion is being completed, and as the successes and problems encountered at the Altyn Dala area (see Outcome 2) become clearer, the project will support a final assessment of lessons learned, progress on legal changes, etc. Based on this assessment, a long-term strategy and guidelines for PA expansion in the steppe region will be adopted, including targets for area, coverage by ecological zone, etc. This strategy will represent a detailed PA expansion strategy and program for this region within the framework of the overall 2007-2030 expansion plan.

Outcome 2 - Tools for landscape-level steppe conservation planning and management are developed and implemented by key stakeholders

63. This outcome will demonstrate techniques for increasing the effectiveness of steppe protected areas by enhancing the conservation-friendliness of intervening landscape areas. To enable the emergence of a supportive matrix of land uses, GEF will provide incremental support for the development and implementation of tools for landscape-level steppe conservation planning and management. For this purpose, a pilot area has been selected: the Irgiz-Turgai-Zhylanshyk (ITZ) area (see [MAP 2](#)) which covers approximately 6.2 million ha. and is located in Central Kazakhstan in the western-central portion of the 56.5 million ha. 'Altyn Dala' landscape. The latter, location of the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative (ADCI), represents the traditional migratory range of the Betpak-Dala population of saiga and includes a major new PA – Altyn Dala Rezervat – being established under the Stage I expansion cycle. Ecologically, the ITZ area consists of dry steppe, desertified steppe and steppe semi-desert, along with wetlands such as the Sarykopa lake system, steppe rivers like the Turgai and Uly-Zhylanshyk rivers, clay slopes and sands with rich vegetation as the Tosynkum sands. It provides habitat for key steppe species as kulan, corsac fox, wolf, steppe marmot, little bustard, great bustard, steppe eagle, black vulture and demoiselle's crane. Breeding sociable lapwing has been observed for the first time in a calving ground of saiga. The area includes the most important summer pastures and calving areas of the Betpak-Dala population of saiga.³⁴ At least three calving areas and the largest observed group of synchronized calving saiga (about 4000

³⁴ Three of five Saiga populations have their main range in Kazakhstan: The Betpakdala Population, the Ustyurt Population and the Ural Population. The Ural and Ustyurt populations migrate between Kazakhstan and Russia and Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, respectively. The migratory routes of the Betpakdala Populations are located completely within Kazakhstan. The population migrates about 1,000 km between winter and summer pastures. Estimated population sizes in 2007 were: Betpakdala Population: 22,760 animals; Ustyurt Population: 16,430; Ural Population: 15,630

females) seen in at least a decade has recently been discovered in this area.³⁵ The pilot area contains three PAs – Irgiz-Turgai Rezervat, Irgiz-Turgai Zakaznik and Sarykopa Zakaznik – totaling 1,162,750 ha., as well as the soon-to-be-established Altyn Dala Rezervat. However, in order to achieve ITZ landscape-level goals, a combination of additional measures will be needed. These will include: (i) systems for ecological monitoring and knowledge management, (ii) alternative protected area models, such as temporary PAs and (iii) connections among PAs through corridors and areas where sustainable and biodiversity-friendly land use methods, e.g., extensive and mobile livestock production, sustainable and saiga-protecting managed hunting areas, can be implemented.

64. Under Outcome 2, a variety of landscape-level conservation management and planning tools will therefore be developed and demonstrated at the ITZ site. Protected area managers, local authorities (rayon and village akimats) and selected representatives of the local population (e.g. livestock breeders, hunters and agriculturalists) will be closely associated with this process and protected area expansion within the demonstration area will likewise be closely integrated. Protected area and landuse planning (corridors, buffer zones) will provide opportunities to demonstrate participatory and integrated planning processes. Results of the ecological monitoring and knowledge management tools will be essential in elaborating the corridor development strategy. Overall, this outcome will be instrumental in establishing the landscape-level elements of a Protected Area complex in crucial habitats for saiga and steppe key species within the ADCI area. This complex will connect the three parts of the future Altyn Dala State Nature Rezervat with the Irgiz-Turgai State Nature Rezervat and the Irgiz-Turgai Zakaznik. The complex will consist of PAs of different types, their buffer zones and corridors connecting them. Corridors will consist of sustainable managed hunting areas, tourism concessions, community conservation areas, private conservation areas, areas where sustainable land use forms are promoted and implemented, etc. In this way, the outcome will serve to demonstrate how landscape-level efforts of various kinds can aid PA sustainability and conservation effectiveness within Kazakhstan's steppe region. Outputs under Outcome 2 are described below.

65. Output 2.1: Steppe ecological monitoring and knowledge management / decision support system to inform steppe land use and conservation planning: This will be developed in partnership with Government (MEP, CFH), GTZ and ADCI partners. Steppe ecological monitoring and knowledge management are essential elements in conservation-based land use management and planning. The creation of such a system under this output, and its application within the ITZ pilot area, will help to eliminate important information barriers to effective steppe management. Among other benefits, the system will aid in the definition of wildlife corridors and other land use planning decisions, while helping steppe conservation practitioners to understand whether their efforts are bearing fruit. In this latter respect, it will represent an important tool for adaptive management. The system will offer support in the following areas: (i) coordinating and harmonizing research activities; (ii) coordinating and harmonizing different monitoring systems of various stakeholders; (iii) providing data and tools for use by decision making and planning agencies (this includes gap analysis, saiga monitoring, data on saiga habitat, migration and distribution, etc.); and (iv) providing data and information for steppe conservation strategies and PA planning. Apart from its own research data, the system will merge monitoring data collected by hunting areas (in cooperation with GTZ), local administrations / akimats, local land users, Okhotzoprom, ADCI, CACILM, CFH and IBAs. This will require adapting and harmonizing the monitoring systems of various stakeholders, including the Information Center at MEP. Data relevant for land use planning will be channeled to the Environmental Information Center in the MEP. Cooperation with the MEP Information Center and the Land Use Agency and coordination between them will be important elements of success. Work under this output will involve cooperation with various national and international research institutions. Development of the system will be coordinated by ADCI/ACBK, in cooperation with RSPB and an appropriate national institute or university. Finally, the system will be

³⁵ The discovery in June 2008 of a group of about 4,000 female saiga calving synchronously in a hidden valley is one of the most outstanding successes of the ADCI. This grouping of the highly endangered ungulate is probably the largest and most important concentration of saiga antelopes which has been observed during the last eight to ten years.

piloted on the ADCI and ITZ levels, as discussed above, before being disseminated at a steppe-wide level towards the end of the project.

66. Output 2.2: Wildlife corridors and associated modalities for landscape-level planning and management defined at ITZ pilot area: Based on information (maps, gap analysis, saiga monitoring etc.) provided by the monitoring and knowledge management system, a number of ‘alternative’ management tools will be designed to operate within landscape areas of the ITZ demonstration area. These are expected to include a combination of wildlife corridors, buffer zones and private or community-based conservation areas. All will be designed to complement, and improve the effectiveness and sustainability of, the PAs within the area. Key aspects of the planning process will include: (i) identifying criteria and assessing options for linking priority areas for steppe conservation with key landscape-scale ecological processes; (ii) defining conservation objectives and identifying corridors using information provided by the monitoring and knowledge management system; (iii) planning workshops with oblast and rayon level stakeholders and decision makers (all three oblasts), along with land use planning agencies; (iv) workshops and meetings with local level stakeholders and focus groups (farmers, hunting area managers, board of elders, akims etc., for informing, and landuse mapping, participative zoning, etc.), including an inception workshop to discuss the overall vision and to discuss planned activities within the area; (v) financial sustainability assessment and strategy for landscape-level management efforts, including potential for community-based eco-tourism, etc.; and (vi) co-operative agreements between oblasts on respective responsibilities with respect to ‘trans-oblast’ corridors. At the conclusion of this process, a landscape-level set of conservation management arrangements will be ready for operationalization.

67. Output 2.3: Operationalization of wildlife corridors at ITZ pilot area: Under Output 2.3, support will be provided for operationalizing the landscape-level management tools designed under the previous output. While precise elements of support are difficult to specify with certainty, given their dependence on the Output 2.2 design process, they are expected to include the following: (i) establishment of corridor management committees, of representatives of local population and user groups local, rayon and oblast level representatives, to monitor, control and adjust activities and land use practices;³⁶ (ii) support for legal and regulatory changes needed to enable landscape-level management tools; (iii) mechanisms for corridor planning, co-operative management and monitoring involving local communities, protected area managers, hunting area managers, institutional land managers and individual land users, will be defined and implemented; (iv) development of new methods for encouraging community-level participation, which in some cases will lay the foundation for more formalized PA arrangements, e.g., seasonal PAs and community co-managed protected areas; (v) identification of sustainable and corridor-supportive land use practices and other activities (e.g. reintroduction of species) using information provided by the monitoring and knowledge management system (maps, gap analysis, saiga monitoring, etc.); (vi) identification of saiga and steppe biodiversity-friendly land uses, e.g. ecotourism (possibly community based), mobile pasture management, sustainable and adapted management of hunting areas. Capacity building support needed for effective management of the above mechanisms including support for corridor management, etc., will be provided under Output 3.5. An important tool will enhance the sustainable management and use of wildlife within the hunting concessions which cover a high percentage of the areas outside PAs as well as creating systems for the sustainable management of pastures. Close cooperation with two GTZ projects on sustainable use of wildlife and natural resources in Central Asia and pasture management, which may soon be merged into a single programme, is expected to create important synergies in this regard.

Outcome 3 - The systemic, institutional and individual capacity for steppe conservation in a wide productive landscape is strengthened

68. Building an effective, representative and sustainable and inter-connected sub-system of protected areas within Kazakhstan’s steppe ecosystems requires a combination of direct actions to support the legal

³⁶ This monitoring will also fit within the monitoring and knowledge management system.

establishment of protected areas as well as a well developed strategy and tools for landscape-level management. However, the resulting instruments—ranging from legally gazetted PAs to landscape-level management and planning systems—cannot be effective without a corresponding set of human, institutional and systemic capacities for their management and operations. Outcome 3 will therefore support the development of capacities necessary for managing both the protected areas being established under Outcome 1 as well as the landscape management tools and processes being developed under Outcome 2. While protected areas newly established under Outcome 1 will be important beneficiaries of capacity building support, other PAs across the steppe ecological zones will also be strengthened. With respect to landscape-level actors and processes, support will be focused within the ITZ demonstration area corresponding with the geographic scope of Outcome 2.

69. **Output 3.1: Operationalization of five new / expanded protected areas:** The legal aspects of the first phase of steppe zone protected area expansion will be completed under Output 1.1. As this milestone approaches for each site, GEF will provide decision-making support to CFH related to broad aspects of the management strategy of soon-to-be established/expanded PAs. This will include identifying options for overall governance structures as well as for operational planning and management, including recommended institutional arrangements. Options will also be identified for operational partnerships, including public-private, public-private-community, private-community, etc. Upon gazettement, new and expanded PAs will become eligible for Government budgetary support for both capital and operational expenses. Given that the nature and speed of budgetary allocations received by new PAs will depend to a large extent on the capacities of CFH staff to prepare well prioritized and timely financing requests, early efforts will also be made to build CFH capacities in this area. To assist CFH in determining staffing requirements for the new/expanded PAs, the project will project human resource capacity needs by looking at staffing, skills, competence levels and knowledge (see also Output 3.3). **Special emphasis will be put on enhancing the benefits and income possibilities for local population by encouraging the recruitment of staff (e.g. rangers) and service providers (e.g. food provision, infrastructure construction, maintenance) from local communities.** Once staff have been recruited, this analysis will be used to identify capacity gaps which can be filled through capacity building efforts. Finally, as new staff begin to be brought on board at new/expanded PAs, and Government-financed capital investments are made at these sites, including infrastructure, etc., GEF will provide incremental support designed to develop capacities of both new staff and—in the case of expanded PAs—existing staff with new responsibilities related to steppe ecosystem management. At each of the target PAs,³⁷ capacities of PA managers and staff to plan for and implement conservation activities within the PAs under their responsibility will be increased. This will include developing capacities to undertake various aspects of management planning and implementation, including designing zoning and other rules for, and monitoring of, user activities within PAs; setting conservation targets, and; ecological monitoring to measure achievement of targets. By project completion, it is expected that all new/expanded PAs will have achieved a level of capacity needed to define and meet key biodiversity conservation goals and targets. This will include the capacity to participate in the definition of, and contribute towards the achievement of, broader, landscape-level goals as well as PA-specific ones.

70. **Output 3.2: Management plans for new/expanded protected areas:** The first management plan will be developed for the already existing Irgiz-Turgai-State Nature Rezervat within the ITZ. Unlike the management plans for stage 1 PAs, the management plan for Irgiz-Turgai-State Nature Rezervat can begin to be developed immediately after project inception. Experiences, lessons learned and methodology of this planning process can be used and applied for the future planning processes of the four steppe PAs to be established in phase 1 of the PA programme which are started 2010 the earliest. The project will support the whole planning process until the final document. **The participatory planning process will include planning meetings with Oblast administrations, CFH, land user focal groups (lifestock breeders, hunters, fishermen, agriculturalists, women, etc.) and PA management. The plans themselves will include**

³⁷ Baianaul, Buiratau, Karkarolinsk and Altyn Dala.

zoning and strategies for the different zones, a description of the objectives of conservation of the PA and related strategies, a business plan and a management strategy. Participatory planning methods will be used to raise awareness and to create knowledge within the local population about the function, management, potential and significance of the protected areas.

71. Output 3.3: Institutional capacities are increased through support for improved organizational structures, staffing standards and accountability: With this output, the focus of efforts will be extended from the four new/expanded PAs to the overall sub-system of steppe PAs and in particular the human resources skills needed to manage these areas. A first activity will be the development of a skills compendium, or catalogue of skills and competencies required for management of different categories of PAs. Based on the skills compendium, a set of occupational standards will be developed to help ensure that required skills are appropriately distributed among the profiles of staffing positions within the system (and eventually among the individuals filling those positions). Thus, for example, it would become clear what technical skills a conservation manager of a Zakaznik within the steppe region would need to have in order to effectively perform his/her functions. Having identified key core skills and competencies for steppe PA management, and allocated them among staffing profiles, the next step would be to assess and identify options for human resource development and training programs in the steppe protected areas in order to address key gaps in competence. This process will involve, inter alia, a review of human resource development and training in protected area institutions in Kazakhstan and especially the ones undertaken as part of the Wetlands and Altai Sayan projects. Based on all of the above, the project will conduct training and development programmes for raising capacities with respect to key competency requirements for the steppe protected areas. In parallel with the above human capacity building efforts, the project will look at the issue of accountability, both individual and organizational. At the level of individual staff, the project will look at CFH's system of assessing staff performance and develop pilot efforts to introduce new performance measurement tools for steppe PA managers and staff. Where possible, these will be linked to tangible indicators associated with PA management, financial performance, etc.

72. Output 3.4: Options to sustainably finance the management of steppe protected areas are developed and implemented: The purpose of this output is to provide CFH and protected area administrations with tools to identify and implement a range of affordable and sustainable financing options and mechanisms for funding the planning and management of steppe protected areas. A first step in this process will be to identify and assess the current financing mechanisms for protected areas in Kazakhstan and to draw out lessons learned from their implementation. This assessment will build on the understanding of PA system financing developed during project preparation. Next, a range of options regarding alternative financing mechanisms for the steppe protected areas will be examined. Each option will be assessed according to the following criteria: (i) A general description (what is it, how does it work); (ii) The affected stakeholders (who pays, who receives); (iii) Regulatory requirements (enabling legal requirements); (iv) Structural considerations (institutional arrangements and controls for collection and distribution of benefit flows); (v) Optimal pricing and payment systems; (vi) Projected operating costs and income flows; (vii) Likelihood of acceptance of mechanism (risks, willingness-to-pay, political support); (viii) Possible mitigation measures (to overcome low probability of implementation or acceptance of mechanism). In parallel to the above, it will be helpful to estimate the total economic value (TEV) of ecosystem services at ITZ. Economic valuation will serve to underpin PA system financing work by quantifying, and raising awareness among national and local level officials of, the substantial value of ecosystem functions and other components of total economic value of steppe ecosystems. This work will serve as a tool for financial sustainability and associated negotiations. Based on the above, detailed financing/business plans will be developed for two pilot PAs. These will be located within the same pilot area where the TEV was done in order to 'capture' values uncovered through that analysis. Based on the above pilot activities, further applied monitoring and research requirements to support the iterative ongoing development of the protected area financing system will be developed. These will

include, *inter alia*, drafting any secondary legislation which may be required to implement key financing mechanisms.

73. Output 3.5: Enhanced conservation-related knowledge and capacities among non-PA actors across the broader steppe ecosystem landscape: In line with the importance given by this project to activities taking place within the broader landscape, capacity building support under Outcome 3 will likewise target key actors within the broader landscape area. Given the massive size of the landscape in question, support will need to be targeted to the pilot area identified in Outcome 2 above – the ITZ – where various landscape-level conservation mechanisms are being developed. Support at ITZ will focus on raising the capacities of local communities and land use managers to sustainably manage wildlife corridors and buffer zones. It will also support efforts to build understanding of biodiversity-friendly land use methods in key identified areas. Specific target communities and methods will be developed as part of the process of designing the corridors and land use strategy. These efforts will also build capacities which can be used for more direct, co-management and co-operative governance efforts. **Operationalization of each new PA will also include informing the local population about its existence, its boundaries, its functions and benefits; this will include encouraging local participation in the development of PA management plans. Finally, the project will work with local schools and provide educational materials to enhance understanding of steppe conservation and management, including the role of PAs.**

2.3. Project Indicators, Risks and Assumptions

74. The project indicators are detailed in the [Logical Framework](#) – which is attached in Section II, Annex A of this Project Document.

Table 7. Indicators

Objective / Outcomes	Indicators and targets:
Objective: To expand the protected area system of Kazakhstan to ensure an improved coverage of steppe ecosystems	<p>Coverage of steppe ecosystems in the Protected Area System of Kazakhstan 2010: 2,929,960 ha (1.9% of the ecological zone) Target: 915,800 ha of new steppe PAs – of which 860,000 are pure steppe ecosystems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of two new PAs covering 632,708 ha of which only 536,000 is pure addition (as 96,200 ha are already protected as small PAs). - Expansion of two existing PAs by 349,456 ha of steppe ecosystems: <p>2013: 3,429,960 ha or 2.2% of the ecological zone. (establishment of additional 500,000 ha of steppe ecosystem)</p> <p>Size of saiga populations with major proportion of habitat in steppe Target: Betpakdala Saiga population shows an average annual population growth of at least 10%.</p>
Outcome 1: PA system of Kazakhstan contains representative samples of steppe ecosystem under various conservation management regimes and provides effective coverage of ecosystems and ecological processes	<p>Legally established protected areas, as % of area of overall ecological zone</p> <p>Target: By 2010: Total steppe zone coverage: 1.9% (860,00 ha added) Meadow steppe: 3.0 % Dry steppe: 1.3 % Steppe semi-desert: 2.4 % Desertified steppe: 1.7%</p> <p>By 2013: Minimum for combined steppe areas: 2.2</p> <p>Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT): Target: Naurzum – 74%</p>

Objective / Outcomes	Indicators and targets:
	Irgiz Turgai – 60%
Outcome 2: Tools for landscape-level steppe conservation planning and management are developed and implemented by key stakeholders	Landscape level steppe conservation planning complements and improves the effectiveness and ecological sustainability of, the PAs Target: Landscape level steppe conservation planning involving a combination of wildlife corridors, buffer zones and community-based conservation areas designed to complement, and improve the effectiveness and sustainability of, the PAs within the 6.2 million ha of Irgiz-Turgay-Zhylanshyk pilot
	Steppe ecosystem knowledge and monitoring relevant to land use planning of the steppe being undertaken and utilized Target: 2 annual reports with GIS data sheets on steppe ecosystem knowledge and monitoring relevant for land use planning delivered to the Land Use Planning Agency through the Information Center of the MEP
Outcome 3: The systemic, institutional and individual capacity for steppe conservation in a wide productive landscape is strengthened	Annual reports on saiga sightings and defined examined biological parameters (like e.g. sex and age ratios) of PA managers Targets: At least 1 annual report on saiga sightings and defined examined biological parameters (like e.g. sex and age ratios) of PA managers of PAs within ITZ delivered to the CFH
	Improved capacity as measured by the Capacity Assessment scorecard
	Improved financial sustainability as measured by the Financial Assessment scorecard

Table 8. Risks facing the project and the risk mitigation strategy

Risk	Risk rating	Risk mitigation strategy
Failure to establish new protected areas due to prevailing conservative views of local authorities and communities on PAs and their activities	Low	The expansion and strengthening of the national PAS is consistent with the Governmental Program of Development of Special Protected Natural Territories for 2008-2010 which was already approved. The Committee on Forestry and Hunting has already conducted a feasibility study for the establishment of a series of protected areas to conserve steppe ecosystems. This work is a part of the short-term plan (2008-2010) of the Governmental program on expansion of the national PA system. The project will involve the local communities and authorities throughout the entire process of protected area establishment, as the project aims to also pilot co-management models.
Failure to establish co-management conservation regimes due to weak capacity of local communities.	Low	The project will develop the capacities of local communities and authorities to participate in protected area management. The project will incorporate lessons learnt from the other UNDP/GEF projects in Kazakhstan and in Central Asia in capacity development.
Lack of qualified personnel in the national PAS to effectively design and implement an ecologically representative landscape level conservation	Medium	Outcome 3 of the project is focused on capacity development to improve management effectiveness of PA estate. The project will look at improving the organizational structures, staffing standards and accountability and will conduct a comprehensive training programme in protected area management as a part of the wider landscape

Risk	Risk rating	Risk mitigation strategy
management system		
Under different climate scenarios developed for Kazakhstan it is expected that grassland productivity will increase in the early vegetation period, but lower precipitation will negatively affect the second part of the vegetation period, when vegetation productivity may decrease anywhere from 30-90 percent.		The risk of climate change is one of several reasons that the project has chosen to emphasize landscape-level actions together with protected area expansion. The project will enable the emergence of a supportive matrix of land uses, including the ecological corridors to connect protected areas. In addition to benefits for migratory species such as saiga, this approach will limit climate change risk by providing pathways along macro-climatic and upland-lowland gradients to enable species movement in a context of potentially shifting ecological zones.

2.4. Incremental reasoning and expected global, national and local benefits

75. Despite the governmental and relevant stakeholder efforts in steppe conservation and management described in the previous sections, under the baseline scenario, threats will undoubtedly continue to increase in scope and will lead to the increasing loss of the globally significant steppe biodiversity covering more than two million hectares. Many important steppe habitats will remain outside of existing PA boundaries. Some of these habitats include the ranges of rare and endangered species or are important as migratory corridors or reproduction sites. Without the reservation of lands for new PAs and the expansion and adequate participative and modernized management of the PA system, options for the design of an effective system of PAs with core areas, buffer zones and linking corridors would be foreclosed. This would seriously undermine any conservation efforts. Data would be rather rudimentary, such as presence and absence of species and estimated population numbers, and would not be ecosystem-based and used as a basis for the monitoring which will affect decision-making.

76. The global environmental objective of GEF support is to expand the protected area system of Kazakhstan to improve the coverage of steppe ecosystems, which currently are heavily under-represented. This, in turn, will lead to the conservation of globally significant species and habitats found within these territories. Landscape-level interventions will help to ensure the sustainability of the PA system, together with the viability of globally significant populations of migratory ungulates.

77. Under the alternative scenario, Kazakhstan's PA expansion programme will be strengthened in a number of ways as compared with the baseline. First, PAs covering 860,000 ha. that are being legally established under the Stage I programme will be rapidly and successfully operationalized via technical support. Second, a Stage II expansion plan covering an estimated 1.4 million ha. will be carefully designed based, inter alia, on global biodiversity importance and priorities. Third, the process of PA expansion will have been redesigned in a way that will help ensure the continued successful and targeted process of steppe PA expansion. Fourth, an important demonstration of landscape-level management in the context of multiple PAs will have been completed at the ITZ demonstration site. This demonstration will highlight the importance of ecological information and knowledge management, along with tools such as wildlife corridors. This demonstration will provide important lessons to be used in the context of further expansion of the PA system in the steppe ecological zones. Fifth, capacities for PA and landscape-level management will be increased

78. System Boundary: The administrative boundary of the project's outcome consists of protected areas within the steppe ecological zone, together with surrounding and connecting landscapes. In terms of time, baseline and incremental costs have been assessed over the planned 5-year life-span of the project.

79. The total cost of the project, including co-funding and GEF funds, amounts to US\$ 23,758,300. Of this total, co-funding constitutes nearly 91% or US\$ 21,543,300. GEF financing comprises the remaining 9% of the total, or US\$ 2,215,000. The [incremental cost matrix](#) in Annex B of Section provides a summary breakdown of baseline costs and co-funded and GEF-funded alternative costs.

Expected global, national and local benefits:

80. By the end of the project, efforts to conserve biodiversity within Kazakhstan's steppe region will have been strengthened in a number of important ways. The country's protected area system will have been expanded in a manner that eliminates the current, dramatic under-representation of Kazakhstan's main steppe ecological zones. Initial stages of protected area expansion within the steppe region will have been based on a careful process of prioritization, and a framework will be in place to ensure that subsequent stages of expansion follow a similar process. A landscape-level approach to protected area expansion and management will have been demonstrated at the ITZ area, and will be available for replication and adaptation to other corners of Kazakhstan's vast steppe zone or to other ecological zones within the country. Finally, a system for ecological monitoring and knowledge management will have been developed and will be available for expansion to other parts of the country.

81. The project will generate a variety of global biodiversity benefits. At the ecosystem level, important and extensive areas of Pontian steppe will be protected; like other grasslands, this ecosystem type is heavily under-represented globally and its protection inside large PAs will be an important global benefit. While Stage II PAs remain to be identified, nevertheless, it appears highly likely that a large majority of the 2,000 species of flora, including about 30 endemic species, along with unique floristic compositions, found in Kazakhstan's steppe ecosystem zones will be found within protected areas to be created / expanded under the project. Many of these will be species which had not been previously protected within the baseline PA system. This will also include most, if not all, of the twenty main vegetation formations that have been identified,³⁸ of which eight are endemic, two are rare and five represent unique relict communities.

82. In terms of fauna, the project will contribute to the conservation and reduced extinction risk facing nine endangered mammals found in Kazakhstan's steppe ecological zones. These are: Saiga Antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica*), Kulan (*Equus hemionus*), Przewalski Horse (*Equus przewalskii*), Goitered Gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*), Desert Dormouse (*Selevinia betpakdalensis*), Steppe Pika (*Ochotona pumila*), Kazakhstan Argali (*Ovis ammon collium*), Menzbier's marmot (*Marmota menzbieri*) and Palla's Cat (*Felis manul*). In addition, the project is expected to benefit the country's still viable population of grey wolf (*Canis lupus*). Of the four sub species, at least two inhabit the project area: the steppe wolf (*Canis l. campestris*) and the desert wolf (*Canis l. desertorum*).³⁹ Finally, in terms of avifauna, project activities are expected many of the 21 autochthonous endangered bird species found in the steppe, 14 of which are steppe breeding birds.

83. Global benefits will be extended through the project's emphasis on corridors and landscape-level management. Benefits will be particularly important for Saiga and other migratory ungulates. This approach will limit climate change risk by providing pathways along macro-climatic and upland-lowland gradients to enable species movement in a context of potentially shifting ecological zones, which will further benefit communities of flora described above. Finally, the project will help mitigate climate change by stabilising and rehabilitating carbon sinks in soil and above-ground vegetation.

³⁸ Rachkovskaya, E.I., Ogar, N.P., Marynich, O.V. 1999, Redkie pastitelnye soobshchestva stepej Kazakhstana i ikh okhrana. Stepoj Buletin: Novosibirsk. 3-4, 1999. pages 41-46

³⁹ Sludskij & Badamshin et al. 1981.

2.5. Country Ownership: Country Eligibility and Country Drivenness

84. The project is in line with the national priorities defined in the National Environmental Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and Conception of Environmental Safety for 2004-2015, approved by Presidential Decree. The expansion and strengthening of the national protected areas system is consistent with the short-term Governmental Program of Development of Special Protected Natural Territories for 2007-2009, which is a part of the national “Concept of Development and Location of Special Protected Natural Territories of the Republic of Kazakhstan Until 2030” (endorsed by the GoK on 10 November 2000). The project is also supportive of the Strategic Plan “Ecology and Natural Resources”, which is an element of the long-term national “Kazakhstan-2030” Development Strategy. The commitment of the Government of Kazakhstan to biodiversity conservation has been evident since 1994, when Kazakhstan ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and subsequently prepared its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)—following regulations and requirements of CBD—to address the issue of conservation and sustainable use of its biological diversity. The NBSAP focuses on: (i) In-situ conservation of biological diversity; (ii) Accounting for and socio-economic assessment of the country biological capacity and its balanced use in the legal framework; (iii) Expanding the genetic fund, and providing genetic independence and biological security of the country; (iv) Establishing conditions for conservation of the genetic fund of agricultural crop varieties, in particular, of agricultural animals and making agricultural land more productive.

85. Within the framework of the programme on Environment Protection of Kazakhstan for 2008-2010, the Ministry of Environmental Protection plans to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the country’s progress in meeting its commitments under the CBD. NBSAP will be updated based on the findings and recommendations of the assessment.

86. The project is in line with the national priorities defined in the National Environmental Action Plan, the Programme on Environment Protection for 2008-2010, Conception of Environmental Safety for 2004-2015, approved by Presidential Decree. The expansion and strengthening of the national protected areas system is consistent with the short-term Governmental Program on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Water Resources, Fauna, and Development of Special Protected Areas System for 2008-2010. The section on SPA development is a part of the national “Concept of Development and Location of Special Protected Natural Territories of the Republic of Kazakhstan Until 2030” (endorsed by the GoK on 10 November 2000). The project is also supportive of the Strategic Plan “Ecology and Natural Resources”, which is an element of the long-term national “Kazakhstan-2030” Development Strategy.

87. The project’s support for the conservation of rare and endangered species and the strengthening of trans-boundary conservation management is also consistent with and promotes the implementation of the “Agreement on Conservation and Use of Migratory Bird and Mammal Species and Their Habitats” signed by Kazakhstan in 1994, as well as the “Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Protection, Reproduction and Utilization of Fauna” dated 21 October 1993.

2.6. Sustainability

88. Environmental sustainability: Project activities are aimed directly at enhancing the ecological sustainability of steppe ecosystems. By enabling the recovery of migratory ungulate populations, the project will help to reverse processes of steppe ecosystem degradation which currently threaten the sustainable use of these ecosystems and the sustainable delivery of key ecosystem functions.

89. Financial sustainability: Output 3.4 will contribute to the financial sustainability of the PA system by providing CFH and protected area administrations with tools to identify and implement a range of affordable and sustainable financing options and mechanisms for funding the planning and management

of steppe protected areas. A range of options regarding alternative financing mechanisms for the steppe protected areas will be examined under this output. Each option will be assessed according to the following criteria: (i) A general description (what is it, how does it work); (ii) The affected stakeholders (who pays, who receives); (iii) Regulatory requirements (enabling legal requirements); (iv) Structural considerations (institutional arrangements and controls for collection and distribution of benefit flows); (v) Optimal pricing and payment systems; (vi) Projected operating costs and income flows; (vii) Likelihood of acceptance of mechanism (risks, willingness-to-pay, political support); (viii) Possible mitigation measures (to overcome low probability of implementation or acceptance of mechanism). In addition, economic valuation work will serve to underpin PA system financing work by quantifying, and raising awareness among national and local level officials of, the substantial value of ecosystem functions and other components of total economic value of steppe ecosystems. This work will serve as a tool for financial sustainability and associated negotiations. Detailed financing/business plans will be developed for two pilot PAs which will help to ‘capture’ values uncovered through that analysis. Based on the above pilot activities, further applied monitoring and research requirements to support the iterative ongoing development of the protected area financing system will be developed. These will include, *inter alia*, drafting any secondary legislation which may be required to implement key financing mechanisms.

90. Social sustainability: This aspect of sustainability will be greatly enhanced by the project’s strategy which involves substantial efforts at landscape level, in the areas buffering and connecting steppe PAs. Local communities will be closely involved in these outputs, which will include efforts to develop co-management models.

91. Institutional sustainability: CFH is deeply engaged and committed to the process of steppe PA expansion. Efforts to raise their human and institutional capacities will help to ensure that follow-up efforts are undertaken professionally and cost effectively.

2.7. Replicability

92. The project has important potential for replication based on two factors: (i) the vast size of Kazakhstan’s steppe ecosystems; (ii) the existence within the country of (three) other significant populations of saiga. The project two main demonstrations – formulation and implementation of PA expansion plans and integrated landscape-level approaches – will provide important lessons that can be extended, first and foremost, to steppe areas where these additional migratory ungulate populations are found. More broadly, lessons can be applied through additional three-year phases of the PA expansion plan. Indeed, this latter mechanism will help to convey project lessons beyond steppe ecosystems into other ecosystems throughout the country. The Government’s PA expansion plan to 2030 provides important evidence that lessons learned by the project will be replicated within further expansion work, and project activities have been designed to enable this. The project will support various mechanisms to enable knowledge transfer. These will include training workshops and participatory planning processes.

PART III: Management Arrangements

93. The project will be executed following established UNDP national execution (NEX) procedures. The Executing Agency/Implementing Partner will be the Ministry of Agriculture’s Committee on Forestry and Hunting (CFH). The Executing Agency/Implementing Partner will appoint a National Project Director and will hire with GEF funding a Project Manager and an administrative/financial assistant. A summary of the roles and responsibilities of the National Project Director, the Project Manager, and the Administrative and Financial Assistant are provided below.

94. The National Project Director will be a high-level government official primarily responsible for overall implementation of the Project. This responsibility includes representing and supporting project

objectives at high decision making levels within the Government of Kazakhstan. The National Project Director also takes the primary responsibility for representing the Project to co-financiers, as well as for ensuring that the required government support to reach the milestones of the Project is available.

95. The Project Manager will assume overall responsibility for the successful implementation of project activities and the achievement of planned project outputs. S/he will work closely with the national and international experts hired under the project, as well as the Project Assistant, and will report to the National Project Director and to the UNDP Country Office. The Administrative and Financial Assistant will provide assistance to the Project Manager in the implementation of day-to-day project activities. S/he is responsible for all administrative (contractual, organizational and logistical) and accounting (disbursements, record-keeping, cash management) matters related to the project.

96. The Executing Agency/Implementing Partner will establish a Project Board (PB) to give advice and guide project implementation, chaired by the National Project Director. The PB will consist of representatives of all key stakeholders and will ensure the inclusion of community-level interests. Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture will represent the interests of Senior Beneficiary. UNDP CO will play the role of Senior Supplier—being a GEF Implementing Agency represented in the country. Project assurance will be ensured by GEF OFP, UNDP CO together with the UNDP GEF RCU. The PB will monitor the project’s implementation, provide guidance and advice, and facilitate communication, cooperation, and coordination among stakeholders and other project partners. At the initial stage of project implementation, the PB may, if deemed advantageous, wish to meet more frequently to build common understanding and to ensure that the project is initiated properly. Further details on the PB are provided in the monitoring and evaluation section of the document. The project will hire short-term national and international experts for specific project assignments (see Part D.VIII of the Project Document for indicative scope of the assignment of key experts/ consultants). Project activities will be contracted out on a competitive basis through tenders.

97. ACBK—the largest biodiversity conservation NGO in Kazakhstan—will be executing Outcome 2 of the project as well as other outputs related to in-situ conservation activities and developing of PA system. ACBK has adequate staff and reasonably sound financial status; has experience in working with national and local government agencies, and other stakeholders groups; and, importantly, has the necessary capacities for landscape level conservation planning and management and PA system development.

98. The project will be implemented in close coordination and collaboration with all relevant government institutions, local communities and NGOs, as well as with other related relevant projects in the region. The UNDP-CO will be an active partner in the project’s implementation. It will support implementation by maintaining the project budget and project expenditures, contracting project personnel, experts and subcontractors, undertaking procurement, and providing other assistance upon request of the National Executing Agency. The UNDP-CO will also monitor the project’s implementation and achievement of the project outcomes and outputs, and will ensure the proper use of UNDP/GEF funds. Financial transactions, reporting and auditing will be carried out in compliance with national regulations and established UNDP rules and procedures for national project execution.

99. In order to accord proper acknowledgement to GEF for providing funding, a GEF logo will appear on all relevant GEF project publications, including, among others, project hardware purchased with GEF funds. Any citation on publications regarding this project will also accord proper acknowledgment to GEF. The UNDP logo will be more prominent (and separated from the GEF logo if possible), as UN visibility is important for security purposes.

PART IV: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Budget

100. Project monitoring and evaluation will be conducted in accordance with established UNDP and GEF procedures and will be provided by the project team and the UNDP Country Office (UNDP-CO) with support from the UNDP/GEF Regional Coordination Unit in Bratislava. The Logical Framework Matrix in Annex 1 provides *performance* and *impact* indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding *means of verification*. The METT tool, Financial Scorecard and Capacity Assessment Scorecard will all be used as instruments to monitor progress in PA management effectiveness. Baseline METT scores attached in Annex E of the CEO Endorsement Document. The M&E plan includes: inception report, project implementation reviews, quarterly and annual review reports, a mid-term and final evaluation. The following sections outline the principle components of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and indicative cost estimates related to M&E activities. The project's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be presented and finalized in the Project's Inception Report following a collective fine-tuning of indicators, means of verification, and the full definition of project staff M&E responsibilities.

Monitoring and reporting⁴⁰

Project Inception Phase

101. A Project Inception Workshop will be conducted with the full project team, relevant government counterparts, co-financing partners, the UNDP-CO and representation from the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit, as well as UNDP-GEF (HQs) as appropriate. A fundamental objective of this Inception Workshop will be to assist the project team to understand and take ownership of the project's goal and objective, as well as finalize preparation of the project's first annual work plan on the basis of the logframe matrix. This will include reviewing the logframe (indicators, means of verification, assumptions), imparting additional detail as needed, and on the basis of this exercise, finalizing the Annual Work Plan (AWP) with precise and measurable performance indicators, and in a manner consistent with the expected outcomes for the project. Additionally, the purpose and objective of the Inception Workshop (IW) will be to: (i) introduce project staff with the UNDP-GEF team which will support the project during its implementation, namely the CO and responsible Regional Coordinating Unit staff; (ii) detail the roles, support services and complementary responsibilities of UNDP-CO and RCU staff vis à vis the project team; (iii) provide a detailed overview of UNDP-GEF reporting and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements, with particular emphasis on the Annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) and related documentation, the Annual Review Report (ARR), as well as mid-term and final evaluations. Equally, the IW will provide an opportunity to inform the project team on UNDP project related budgetary planning, budget reviews, and mandatory budget rephasings. The IW will also provide an opportunity for all parties to understand their roles, functions, and responsibilities within the project's decision-making structures, including reporting and communication lines, and conflict resolution mechanisms. The Terms of Reference for project staff and decision-making structures will be discussed again, as needed, in order to clarify for all, each party's responsibilities during the project's implementation phase.

Monitoring responsibilities and events

102. A detailed schedule of project review meetings will be developed by the project management, in consultation with project implementation partners and stakeholder representatives and incorporated in the Project Inception Report. Such a schedule will include: (i) tentative time frames for Project Board Meetings and (ii) project related Monitoring and Evaluation activities. Day-to-day monitoring of implementation progress will be the responsibility of the Project Manager based on the project's Annual Work Plan and its indicators. The Project Manager will inform the UNDP-CO of any delays or difficulties faced during implementation so that the appropriate support or corrective measures can be adopted in a

⁴⁰ As per GEF guidelines, the project will also be using the BD 1 Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT). New or additional GEF monitoring requirements will be accommodated and adhered to once they are officially launched.

timely and remedial fashion. The Project Manager will fine-tune the progress and performance/impact indicators of the project in consultation with the full project team at the Inception Workshop with support from UNDP-CO and assisted by the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit. Specific targets for the first year implementation progress indicators together with their means of verification will be developed at this Workshop. These will be used to assess whether implementation is proceeding at the intended pace and in the right direction and will form part of the Annual Work Plan. Targets and indicators for subsequent years would be defined annually as part of the internal evaluation and planning processes undertaken by the project team.

103. Measurement of impact indicators related to global biodiversity benefits will occur according to the schedules defined in the Inception Workshop, using METT scores. The measurement of these will be undertaken through subcontracts or retainers with relevant institutions. Periodic monitoring of implementation progress will be undertaken by the UNDP-CO through quarterly meetings with the Implementing Partner, or more frequently as deemed necessary. This will allow parties to take stock and to troubleshoot any problems pertaining to the project in a timely fashion to ensure smooth implementation of project activities.

104. Annual Monitoring will occur through the Project Board Meetings (PBM). This is the highest policy-level meeting of the parties directly involved in the implementation of a project. The project will be subject to PBMs two times a year. The first such meeting will be held within the first six months of the start of full implementation.

105. The Project Manager in consultations with UNDP-CO and UNDP-GEF RCU will prepare a UNDP/GEF PIR/ARR and submit it to PBM members at least two weeks prior to the PBM for review and comments. The PIR/ARR will be used as one of the basic documents for discussions in the PB meeting. The Project Manager will present the PIR/ARR to the Project Board, highlighting policy issues and recommendations for the decision of the PBM participants. The Project Manager also informs the participants of any agreement reached by stakeholders during the PIR/ARR preparation on how to resolve operational issues. Separate reviews of each project component may also be conducted if necessary. The Project Board has the authority to suspend disbursement if project performance benchmarks are not met. Benchmarks will be developed at the Inception Workshop, based on delivery rates, and qualitative assessments of achievements of outputs.

106. The terminal PBM is held in the last month of project operations. The Project Manager is responsible for preparing the Terminal Report and submitting it to UNDP-CO and UNDP-GEF RCU. It shall be prepared in draft at least two months in advance of the terminal PBM in order to allow review, and will serve as the basis for discussions in the PBM. The terminal meeting considers the implementation of the project as a whole, paying particular attention to whether the project has achieved its stated objectives and contributed to the broader environmental objective. It decides whether any actions are still necessary, particularly in relation to sustainability of project results, and acts as a vehicle through which lessons learnt can be captured to feed into other projects under implementation of formulation.

107. UNDP Country Offices and UNDP-GEF RCU as appropriate, will conduct yearly visits to project sites based on an agreed upon schedule to be detailed in the project's Inception Report/Annual Work Plan to assess first hand project progress. Any other member of the Project Board can also accompany. A Field Visit Report/BTOR will be prepared by the CO and UNDP-GEF RCU and circulated no less than one month after the visit to the project team, all Project Board members, and UNDP-GEF.

Project Reporting

108. The Project Manager in conjunction with the UNDP-GEF extended team will be responsible for the preparation and submission of the following reports that form part of the monitoring process. The first

six reports are mandatory and strictly related to monitoring, while the last two have a broader function and the frequency and nature is project specific to be defined throughout implementation.

109. A Project Inception Report will be prepared immediately following the Inception Workshop. It will include a detailed First Year/ Annual Work Plan divided in quarterly time-frames detailing the activities and progress indicators that will guide implementation during the first year of the project. This Work Plan will include the dates of specific field visits, support missions from the UNDP-CO or the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) or consultants, as well as time-frames for meetings of the project's decision making structures. The Report will also include the detailed project budget for the first full year of implementation, prepared on the basis of the Annual Work Plan, and including any monitoring and evaluation requirements to effectively measure project performance during the targeted 12 months time-frame. The Inception Report will include a more detailed narrative on the institutional roles, responsibilities, coordinating actions and feedback mechanisms of project related partners. In addition, a section will be included on progress to date on project establishment and start-up activities and an update of any changed external conditions that may effect project implementation. When finalized, the report will be circulated to project counterparts who will be given a period of one calendar month in which to respond with comments or queries. Prior to this circulation of the IR, the UNDP Country Office and UNDP-GEF's Regional Coordinating Unit will review the document.

110. An Annual Review Report shall be prepared by the Project Manager and shared with the Project Board. As a self-assessment by the project management, it does not require a cumbersome preparatory process. As minimum requirement, the Annual Review Report shall consist of the Atlas standard format for the Project Progress Report (PPR) covering the whole year with updated information for each element of the PPR as well as a summary of results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the project level. As such, it can be readily used to spur dialogue with the Project Board and partners. An ARR will be prepared on an annual basis prior to the Project Board meeting to reflect progress achieved in meeting the project's Annual Work Plan and assess performance of the project in contributing to intended outcomes through outputs and partnership work. The ARR should consist of the following sections: (i) project risks and issues; (ii) project progress against pre-defined indicators and targets and (iii) outcome performance.

111. The Project Implementation Review (PIR) is an annual monitoring process mandated by the GEF. It has become an essential management and monitoring tool for project managers and offers the main vehicle for extracting lessons from ongoing projects. Once the project has been under implementation for a year, a Project Implementation Report must be completed by the CO together with the project team. The PIR should be participatorily prepared in July and discussed with the CO and the UNDP/GEF Regional Coordination Unit during August with the final submission to the UNDP/GEF Headquarters in the first week of September.

112. Quarterly progress reports: Short reports outlining main updates in project progress will be provided quarterly to the local UNDP Country Office and the UNDP-GEF RCU by the project team.

113. UNDP ATLAS Monitoring Reports: A Combined Delivery Report (CDR) summarizing all project expenditures, is mandatory and should be issued quarterly. The Project Manager should send it to the Project Board for review and the Implementing Partner should certify it. The following logs should be prepared: (i) The Issues Log is used to capture and track the status of all project issues throughout the implementation of the project. It will be the responsibility of the Project Manager to track, capture and assign issues, and to ensure that all project issues are appropriately addressed; (ii) the Risk Log is maintained throughout the project to capture potential risks to the project and associated measures to manage risks. It will be the responsibility of the Project Manager to maintain and update the Risk Log, using Atlas; and (iii) the Lessons Learned Log is maintained throughout the project to capture insights and lessons based on good and bad experiences and behaviours. It is the responsibility of the Project Manager to maintain and update the Lessons Learned Log.

114. Project Terminal Report: During the last three months of the project the project team will prepare the Project Terminal Report. This comprehensive report will summarize all activities, achievements and outputs of the Project, lessons learnt, objectives met, or not achieved, structures and systems implemented, etc. and will be the definitive statement of the Project's activities during its lifetime. It will also lay out recommendations for any further steps that may need to be taken to ensure sustainability and replicability of the Project's activities.

115. Periodic Thematic Reports: As and when called for by UNDP, UNDP-GEF or the Implementing Partner, the project team will prepare Specific Thematic Reports, focusing on specific issues or areas of activity. The request for a Thematic Report will be provided to the project team in written form by UNDP and will clearly state the issue or activities that need to be reported on. These reports can be used as a form of lessons learnt exercise, specific oversight in key areas, or as troubleshooting exercises to evaluate and overcome obstacles and difficulties encountered. UNDP is requested to minimize its requests for Thematic Reports, and when such are necessary will allow reasonable timeframes for their preparation by the project team.

116. Technical Reports are detailed documents covering specific areas of analysis or scientific specializations within the overall project. As part of the Inception Report, the project team will prepare a draft Reports List, detailing the technical reports that are expected to be prepared on key areas of activity during the course of the Project, and tentative due dates. Where necessary this Reports List will be revised and updated, and included in subsequent APRs. Technical Reports may also be prepared by external consultants and should be comprehensive, specialized analyses of clearly defined areas of research within the framework of the project and its sites. These technical reports will represent, as appropriate, the project's substantive contribution to specific areas, and will be used in efforts to disseminate relevant information and best practices at local, national and international levels.

117. Project Publications will form a key method of crystallizing and disseminating the results and achievements of the Project. These publications may be scientific or informational texts on the activities and achievements of the Project, in the form of journal articles, multimedia publications, etc. These publications can be based on Technical Reports, depending upon the relevance, scientific worth, etc. of these Reports, or may be summaries or compilations of a series of Technical Reports and other research. The project team will determine if any of the Technical Reports merit formal publication, and will also (in consultation with UNDP, the government and other relevant stakeholder groups) plan and produce these Publications in a consistent and recognizable format. Project resources will need to be defined and allocated for these activities as appropriate and in a manner commensurate with the project's budget.

Independent evaluations

118. The project will be subjected to at least two independent external evaluations as follows: An independent Mid-Term Evaluation will be undertaken at exactly the mid-point of the project lifetime. The Mid-Term Evaluation will determine progress being made towards the achievement of outcomes and will identify course correction if needed. It will focus on the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation; will highlight issues requiring decisions and actions; and will present initial lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. Findings of this review will be incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the final half of the project's term. The organization, terms of reference and timing of the mid-term evaluation will be decided after consultation between the parties to the project document. The Terms of Reference for this Mid-term evaluation will be prepared by the UNDP CO based on guidance from the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit.

119. An independent Final Evaluation will take place three months prior to the terminal Project Board meeting, and will focus on the same issues as the mid-term evaluation. The final evaluation will also look at impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development and the achievement of global environmental goals. The Final Evaluation should also provide recommendations

for follow-up activities. The Terms of Reference for this evaluation will be prepared by the UNDP CO based on guidance from the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit.

Audit Clause

120. The Government will provide the Resident Representative with certified periodic financial statements, and with an annual audit of the financial statements relating to the status of UNDP (including GEF) funds according to the established procedures set out in the Programming and Finance manuals. The Audit will be conducted by the legally recognized auditor of the Government, or by a commercial auditor engaged by the Government.

Learning and knowledge sharing

121. Results from the project will be disseminated within and beyond the project intervention zone through a number of existing information sharing networks and forums. In addition, the project will participate, as relevant and appropriate, in UNDP/GEF sponsored networks, organized for Senior Personnel working on projects that share common characteristics. UNDP/GEF Regional Unit has established an electronic platform for sharing lessons between the project coordinators. The project will identify and participate, as relevant and appropriate, in scientific, policy-based and/or any other networks, which may be of benefit to project implementation though lessons learned. The project will identify, analyze, and share lessons learned that might be beneficial in the design and implementation of similar future projects. Identifying and analyzing lessons learned is an on-going process, and the need to communicate such lessons as one of the project's central contributions is a requirement to be delivered not less frequently than once every 12 months. UNDP/GEF shall provide a format and assist the project team in categorizing, documenting and reporting on lessons learned.

Table 8: Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Budget

Type of M&E activity	Responsible Parties	Budget US\$ <i>Excluding project team Staff time</i>	Time frame
Inception Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Coordinator ▪ UNDP CO ▪ UNDP GEF 	10,000	Within first two months of project start up
Inception Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Team ▪ UNDP CO 	None	Immediately following IW
Measurement of Means of Verification for Project Purpose Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Manager will oversee the hiring of specific studies and institutions, and delegate responsibilities to relevant team members 	To be finalized in Inception Phase and Workshop. Indicative cost: 8,000, total: 27,000	Start, mid and end of project
Measurement of Means of Verification for Project Progress and Performance (measured on an annual basis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oversight by Project Manager ▪ Project team 	To be determined as part of the Annual Work Plan's preparation. Indicative cost: 8,000 (annually); total: 40,000	Annually prior to ARR/PIR and to the definition of annual work plans
ARR and PIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Team ▪ UNDP-CO ▪ UNDP-GEF 	None	Annually

Type of M&E activity	Responsible Parties	Budget US\$ <i>Excluding project team Staff time</i>	Time frame
Quarterly progress reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project team 	None	Quarterly
CDRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Manager 	None	Quarterly
Issues Log	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Manager ▪ UNDP CO Programme Staff 	None	Quarterly
Risks Log	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Manager ▪ UNDP CO Programme Staff 	None	Quarterly
Lessons Learned Log	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project Manager ▪ UNDP CO Programme Staff 	None	Quarterly
Mid-term Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project team ▪ UNDP- CO ▪ UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit ▪ External Consultants (i.e. evaluation team) 	40,000	At the mid-point of project implementation.
Final Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project team, ▪ UNDP-CO ▪ UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit ▪ External Consultants (i.e. evaluation team) 	40,000	At the end of project implementation
Terminal Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project team ▪ UNDP-CO ▪ local consultant 	0	At least one month before the end of the project
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project team ▪ UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit (suggested formats for documenting best practices, etc) 	15,000 (average 3,000 per year)	Yearly
Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNDP-CO ▪ Project team 	15,000 (average 3,000 per year)	Yearly
Visits to field sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNDP Country Office ▪ UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit (as appropriate) ▪ Government representatives 	Paid from IA fees and operational budget	Yearly
TOTAL indicative COST Excluding project team staff time and UNDP staff and travel expenses		US\$ 187,000	

PART V: Legal Context

This Project Document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article I of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Development Programme, signed by the parties on 4 October 1994. The host country implementing agency shall, for the purpose of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement, refer to the government co-operating agency described in that Agreement.

The UNDP Resident Representative in Kazakhstan is authorized to effect in writing the following types of revision to this Project Document, provided that he/she has verified the agreement thereto by the UNDP-GEF Unit and is assured that the other signatories to the Project Document have no objection to the proposed changes:

- a) Revision of, or addition to, any of the annexes to the Project Document;
- b) Revisions which do not involve significant changes in the immediate objectives, outputs or activities of the project, but are caused by the rearrangement of the inputs already agreed to or by cost increases due to inflation;
- c) Mandatory annual revisions which re-phase the delivery of agreed project inputs or increased expert or other costs due to inflation or take into account agency expenditure flexibility; and
- d) Inclusion of additional annexes and attachments only as set out here in this Project Document

SECTION II : STRATEGIC RESULTS FRAMEWORK (SRF) AND GEF INCREMENT

Annex A: Project logical framework

Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators																				
Goal	to conserve the globally significant steppe biodiversity of Kazakhstan																				
Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Baseline		Target	Sources of verification	Assumptions															
Objective: To expand the protected area system of Kazakhstan to ensure an improved coverage of steppe ecosystems	Coverage of steppe ecosystems in the Protected Area System of Kazakhstan	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ecosystem Type</th> <th>PA (ha)</th> <th>PA as % of ecological zone</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Forest steppe</td> <td>620,068</td> <td>8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>River, lakes, forests</td> <td>2,336,645</td> <td>14.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mountains</td> <td>6,553,771</td> <td>16.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Steppe</td> <td>2,069,960</td> <td>1.35</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Ecosystem Type	PA (ha)	PA as % of ecological zone	Forest steppe	620,068	8.1	River, lakes, forests	2,336,645	14.8	Mountains	6,553,771	16.2	Steppe	2,069,960	1.35	2010: 2,929,960 ha (1.9% of the ecological zone) (915,800 ha of new steppe PAs) – of which 860,000 are pure steppe ecosystems - Establishment of two new PAs covering 632,708 ha of which only 536,000 is pure addition (as 96,200 ha are already protected as small PAs). - expansion of two existing PAs by 349,456 ha of steppe ecosystems: 2013: 3,429,960 ha or 2.2% of the ecological zone. (establishment of additional 500,000 ha of steppe ecosystem)	GIS Cadastre	There are no external catastrophic events – such as climatic events or livestock diseases – compromising the project’s objective of achieving stabilization or increasing populations of globally threatened species.
		Ecosystem Type	PA (ha)	PA as % of ecological zone																	
Forest steppe	620,068	8.1																			
River, lakes, forests	2,336,645	14.8																			
Mountains	6,553,771	16.2																			
Steppe	2,069,960	1.35																			
Size of saiga populations with major proportion of habitat in steppe	Size of Betpakdala Saiga population: 22,760 animals (Source; CFH census, 2007)		Betpakdala Saiga population shows an average annual population growth of at least 10%.	Saiga monitoring reports of CFH and ACBK																	

Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators				
Goal	to conserve the globally significant steppe biodiversity of Kazakhstan				
Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Outcome 1: PA system of Kazakhstan contains representative samples of steppe ecosystem under various conservation management regimes and provides effective coverage of ecosystems and ecological processes	Legally established protected areas, as % of area of overall ecological zone Meadow steppe: Dry steppe: Steppe semi-desert: Desertified steppe:	Total steppe zone coverage: 1.35 % Meadow steppe: 2.5% Dry steppe: 1.0% Steppe semi-desert: 2.1% Desertified steppe: 0.4%	By 2010: Total steppe zone coverage: 1.9% (860,00 ha added) Meadow steppe: 3.0 % Dry steppe: 1.3 % Steppe semi-desert: 2.4 % Desertified steppe: 1.7% By 2013: Minimum for combined steppe areas: 2.2 %	GIS calculations based on ECONET data on ecosystems	GOU maintains political and operational support to the National Action Plan for Protected Areas System Management (a key baseline element of the project). Local residents and private sector stakeholders are willing to participate in PPPs based on economic benefits they can realize.
	Management Effectiveness of PAs at project sites (METT Scorecard)	Naurzum – 59% Irgiz Turgai – 34%	Naurzum – 74% Irgiz Turgai – 60%	Application of METT in line with monitoring and evaluation component of the project	
Outcome 2: Tools for landscape-level steppe conservation planning and management are developed and implemented by key stakeholders	Landscape level steppe conservation planning complements and improves the effectiveness and ecological sustainability of, the PAs	No landscape-level conservation planning and management model in Kazakhstan; No wildlife corridors Protected Areas managed in isolation	Landscape level steppe conservation planning involving a combination of wildlife corridors, buffer zones and community-based conservation areas designed to complement, and improve the effectiveness and sustainability of, the PAs within the 6.2 million ha of Irgiz-Turgay-Zhylyanshyk pilot	Cadastre GIS	Economic benefits from wildlife corridors will be sufficient to maintain community participation and involvement
	Steppe ecosystem knowledge and monitoring relevant to land use planning of the steppe being undertaken and utilized	No monitoring and knowledge management system existing.	2 annual reports with GIS data sheets on steppe ecosystem knowledge and monitoring relevant for land use planning delivered to the Land Use Planning Agency through the Information Center of the MEP	Reports received by MEP	Land Use Planning Agency will take necessary steps to ensure that GIS data is effectively utilized for land use planning purposes

Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators				
Goal	to conserve the globally significant steppe biodiversity of Kazakhstan				
Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	Annual reports on saiga sightings by corridor management committees in ITZ	No corridor committees existing in ITZ	At least 1 annual report on saiga sightings within ITZ delivered to the CFH	Reports	
Outcome 3: The systemic, institutional and individual capacity for steppe conservation in a wide productive landscape is strengthened	Annual reports on saiga sightings and defined examined biological parameters (like e.g. sex and age ratios) of PA managers	No annual reporting on data relevant to saiga ecology by PA managers	At least 1 annual report on saiga sightings and defined examined biological parameters (like e.g. sex and age ratios) of PA managers of PAs within ITZ delivered to the CFH	Reports	No breakdown in local economies
	Capacity Scorecard Policy formulation Systemic Institutional Implementation Systemic Institutional Individual Engagement and consensus Systemic Institutional Individual Mobilize info and knowledge Systemic Institutional Individual Monitoring Systemic Institutional Individual	Policy Formulation 4/out of 6 2/out of 3 Implementation 5/out of 9 17/out of 27 6/out of 12 Eng. and consensus 4/out of 6 3/out of 6 2/out of 3 Info and knowledge 2/out of 3 2/out of 3 1/out of 3 Monitoring 3/out of 6 2/out of 6 0/out of 3	Policy Formulation 6/out of 6 3/out of 3 Implementation 8/out of 9 33/out of 36 10/out of 12 Eng. and consensus 6/out of 6 5/out of 6 3/out of 3 Info and knowledge 3/out of 3 3/out of 3 2/out of 3 Monitoring 5/out of 6 4/out of 6 2/out of 3	Capacity assessment scorecard	

Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators				
Goal	to conserve the globally significant steppe biodiversity of Kazakhstan				
Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	<u>Financial Sustainability Scorecard</u> Legal and regulatory framework Business planning Tools for revenue generation	55% - 49/out of 89 33% - 19/out of 57 22% - 10/out of 46	82% - 73/89 58% - 33/57 54% - 25/46	Financial Sustainability scorecard	
<i>Outcome 1: PA System of Kazakhstan contains representative samples of steppe ecosystem under various conservation management regimes and is effective in protecting ecosystems and ecological processes</i> Output 1.1: Gazettement of two new and two expanded steppe zone PAs Output 1.2: Stage II steppe PA expansion plan, with associated legal changes Output 1.3: At least one new PA gazetted, two PAs expanded and 500,000 ha. of steppe ecosystems covered within the steppe region under second stage of PA expansion plan (2011-2013) Output 1.4: Long-term framework for steppe PA expansion					
<i>Outcome 2: Tools for landscape-level steppe conservation planning and management are developed and implemented by key stakeholders</i> Output 2.1: Steppe ecological monitoring and knowledge management / decision support system to inform steppe land use and conservation planning Output 2.2: Wildlife corridors and associated modalities for landscape-level planning and management defined at ITZ pilot area Output 2.3: Operationalization of wildlife corridors at ITZ pilot area					
<i>Outcome 3: The systemic, institutional and individual capacity for steppe conservation is strengthened</i> Output 3.1: Operationalization of five new / expanded protected areas Output 3.2: Management plans for new/ expanded protected areas Output 3.3: Institutional capacities are increased through support for improved organizational structures, staffing standards and accountability. Output 3.4: Options to sustainably finance the management of steppe protected areas are developed and implemented Output 3.5: Enhanced conservation-related knowledge and capacities among non-PA actors across the broader steppe ecosystem landscape					

Annex B: Incremental Cost Analysis

122. In 2000, Kazakhstan adopted a strategy for PA system expansion until the year 2030, which included a call for expanding the area of zapovedniks and national parks to cover 3% of national territory.⁴¹ In developing the strategy, the Government conducted a series of feasibility studies and analyses on the integration of steppe ecosystems into the national protected area system, which highlighted the fact that steppe areas were heavily under-represented within the country's protected area system (PAS). As a result, the strategy lists as a priority action the establishment of steppe PAs covering 2.2 million ha. The project addresses the main barriers that prevent the country from addressing threats to steppe biodiversity: (i) Emphasis on a traditional and overly complicated approach to PA expansion, which will not be sufficient to achieve steppe ecosystem conservation; (ii) Inadequate tools, practices and processes for landscape-level conservation management, and; (iii) Limited systemic, institutional and individual capacities for steppe conservation and management

Baseline trend of development of the Kazakhstan's PA system and key baseline programs

123. Baseline programs may be divided into three main areas, which are described below.

(i) Establishing new protected areas: Table 1 presents the baseline for the first three-year phase ('Stage I') of protected area establishment / expansion, at the level of individual PAs.

Year Protected area	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Altyn Dala (new)	TEO prepared by ACBK; Decree on establishment expected by end 2009	Government spending on infrastructure, recruitment of new staff	Government spending on running costs	Government spending on running costs	Government spending on running costs
Bayanaul (established in 2007 – part of the project preparation efforts)	Government spending on infrastructure, recruitment of new staff	Government spending on running costs	Government spending on running costs	Government spending on running costs	Government spending on running costs
Buiratau	Decree on establishment expected by end 2009	Government spending on infrastructure, recruitment of new staff	Government spending on running costs	Government spending on running costs	Government spending on running costs
Karkaralinsky (extended)	Decree on establishment expected by end 2008; Government spending on infrastructure,	Government spending on running costs	Government spending on running costs	Government spending on running costs	Government spending on running costs

⁴¹ Concept on development of Protected Areas in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030. Decree of the Government of Kazakhstan # 1692 from 10.11.2000

Year Protected area	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	recruitment of new staff				
Korgalzhin	Decree on establishment expected by end 2008; Government spending on infrastructure, recruitment of new staff	Government spending on running costs			

(ii) Landscape-level management and planning: The Government-funded baseline in this area includes actions implemented by Okhotzooptom, which are focused on saiga monitoring and conservation, as well as species re-introduction efforts for Bukhara Deer, Goitered Gazelle, Wild sheep, Kulan. The recent establishment of hunting areas, which has led to a large number of rangers being privately hired, has also created new opportunities for improved wildlife management and ecological monitoring. The ADCI partners, in addition to their support for the expansion of the PA system, have also begun to emphasise such landscape-level interventions.

(iii) Capacity building for PA and landscape management: Capacity building support under the baseline consists of technical co-operation from ADCI partners and GTZ. ADCI support is planned for the Altyn Dala PA, once it has been established. GTZ will support landscape-level management through national-level support to CFH for management of hunting areas.

124. Despite the above efforts, under the baseline scenario, threats will undoubtedly continue to increase in scope and will lead to the increasing loss of the globally significant steppe biodiversity covering more than two million hectares. Many important steppe habitats will remain outside of existing PA boundaries. Some of these habitats include the ranges of rare and endangered species or are important as migratory corridors or reproduction sites. Without the reservation of lands for new PAs and the expansion and adequate participative and modernized management of the PA system, options for the design of an effective system of PAs with core areas, buffer zones and linking corridors would be foreclosed. This would seriously undermine any conservation efforts. Data would be rather rudimentary, such as presence and absence of species and estimated population numbers, and would not be ecosystem-based and used as a basis for the monitoring which will affect decision-making.

Global Environmental Objective

125. The global environmental objective of GEF support is to expand the protected area system of Kazakhstan to improve the coverage of steppe ecosystems, which currently are heavily under-represented. This, in turn, will lead to the conservation of globally significant species and habitats found within these territories. Landscape-level interventions will help to ensure the sustainability of the PA system, together with the viability of globally significant populations of migratory ungulates.

Alternative

126. Under the alternative scenario, Kazakhstan's PA expansion programme will be strengthened in a number of ways as compared with the baseline. First, PAs covering 860,000 ha that are being legally established under the Stage I programme will be rapidly and successfully operationalized via technical support. Second, a Stage II expansion plan covering an estimated 1.4 million ha will be carefully designed

based, inter alia, on global biodiversity importance and priorities. Third, the process of PA expansion will have been redesigned in a way that will help ensure the continued successful and targeted process of steppe PA expansion. Fourth, an important demonstration of landscape-level management in the context of multiple PAs will have been completed at the ITZ demonstration site. This demonstration will highlight the importance of ecological information and knowledge management, along with tools such as wildlife corridors. This demonstration will provide important lessons to be used in the context of further expansion of the PA system in the steppe ecological zones. Fifth, capacities for PA and landscape-level management will be increased

System Boundary

127. The administrative boundary of the project's outcome consists of protected areas within the steppe ecological zone, together with surrounding and connecting landscapes. In terms of time, baseline and incremental costs have been assessed over the planned 5-year life-span of the project.

Summary of Costs

The total cost of the project, including co-funding and GEF funds, amounts to US\$ 23,758,300. Of this total, co-funding constitutes 91% or US\$ 21,543,300. GEF financing comprises the remaining 9% of the total, or US\$ 2,215,000. The incremental cost matrix below provides a summary breakdown of baseline costs and co-funded and GEF-funded alternative costs.

Table 1. Incremental Cost Matrix

Benefits and Costs	Baseline (US\$)	Alternative	Increment (US\$)
Global benefits	Further reduction in the populations of threatened, near-threatened, and vulnerable species. Continued degradation of steppe ecosystems.	The alternative scenario will ensure improvement of populations of all IUCN vulnerable, threatened and near-threatened species supported by the expanding steppe components of Kazakhstan's PA system.	Barriers to PA financial, administrative and ecological sustainability removed
National and local benefits	Reduced ecosystem services associated with steppe ecosystem functioning, as unbalanced grazing levels continue to lead to land degradation and species loss. Continued loss of nationally important steppe biodiversity and associated use and non-use values	Under the alternative scenario, Kazakhstan will benefit from a more sustainable system of protected areas, long-term increases in environmental economic values associated with consumptive and non-consumptive uses of steppe flora and fauna	Approved Stage II steppe PA expansion plan; Long-term PA expansion plan until 2030 includes representative and globally significant steppe ecosystems; Wildlife corridors and associated modalities for landscape-level planning and management at ITZ pilot area demonstrated and operationalized; New protected areas established and operationalized; PA management plans developed; Organizational structures, staffing and accountability improved; Options for sustainable PA financing developed and implemented; PA actors across the broader steppe ecosystem landscape have enhanced conservation-related knowledge and capacities
Outcome 1 : PA system of Kazakhstan contains representative samples of steppe ecosystem under various conservation management regimes and provides effective coverage of ecosystems and ecological processes	GoK - PA running and infrastructure costs: US\$ 21,400,000 Sub total baseline: US\$ 21,400,000	The Alternative will include the following add-on measures to strengthen PA system of Kazakhstan: Design of steppe PA Expansion Stage II covering an estimated 500,000 ha of steppe ecosystems Associated legal changes Long-term framework for PA expansion until 2030 with representative samples of steppe ecosystem Sub total Alternative: US\$ 28,308,300	<u>Co-financing:</u> GoK – Stage II expansion plan: US\$ 6,164,000 GoK – pre-ENO and TEO works: US\$ 36,000 NGOs: RSPB: US\$ 200,000 ACBK: US\$ 120,000 UNDP: US\$ 8,300 Sub-total Co-financing: US\$ 6,528,300 GEF: US\$ 380,000 Sub-total increment: US\$ 6,908,300

Benefits and Costs	Baseline (US\$)	Alternative	Increment (US\$)
Outcome 2: Tools for landscape-level steppe conservation planning and management are developed and implemented by key stakeholders	GoK – Saiga monitoring: US\$ 750,000 GoK – Saiga conservation and species re-introduction: US\$ 4,750,000	The alternative will include the following add-on activities: Demonstration of landscape-level management in the context of multiple PAs at the ITZ demonstration site. Tools for landscape-level management such as ecological information and knowledge management, along with wildlife corridors. Lessons to be used in the context of further expansion of the PA system in the steppe ecological zones.	GoK - PA corridors and wildlife management: US\$ 6,164,000 GoK - Landscape level database: US\$ 36,000 NGOs: RSPB: US\$ 150,000 ACBK: US\$ 160,000 UNDP: US\$ 8,300 Sub-total Co-financing: US\$ 6,518,300 GEF: US\$ 880,000
	Sub total baseline: US\$ 5,500,000	Sub total Alternative: US\$ 12,898,300	Sub total Increment: 7,398,300
Outcome 3 : The systemic, institutional and individual capacity for steppe conservation in a wide productive landscape is strengthened	ADCI partners - capacity building support: US\$ 280,080 GTZ - landscape-level management through national-level support to CFH for management of hunting areas: US\$ 3,900,000	The alternative will include the following add-on activities: Technical support for rapid and successful operationalization of 840,000 ha of legally established PAs under Phase I programme Staffing standards and accountability Optimized organizational structure PA management and business planning PA sustainable financing strategy	GoK - PA corridors and wildlife management: US\$ 6,165,300 NGOs: RSPB: US\$ 37,000 ACBK: US\$ 120,000 UNDP: US\$ 8,400 Sub-total Co-financing: US\$ 6,330,700 GEF: US\$ 740,000 Sub total Increment: 7,070,700
	Sub total baseline: US\$ 4,180,080	Sub total Alternative: US\$ 11,250,780	Sub total Increment: 7,070,700
TOTAL	TOTAL BASELINE: US\$ 31,080,080	TOTAL ALTERNATIVE: US\$ 52,457,380	TOTAL INCREMENT: COFINANCING FOR OUTCOMES: US\$ 21,377,300 COFINANCING FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT: US\$ 2,166,000 TOTAL COFINANCING: 21,543,300 GEF FOR OUTCOMES: US\$ 2,000,000 PROJECT MANAGEMENT (GEF): US\$ 215,000 TOTAL GEF: 2,215,000

SECTION III: Total Budget and Workplan

Award ID: 00050708											
Award Title: PIMS 3835 BD FSP: Steppe Conservation and Management											
Project ID: 00062761											
Project Title: PIMS 3835 BD FSP: Steppe Conservation and Management											
Executing Agency: Government of Kazakhstan: Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture of RK											
GEF Outcome/Atlas Activity	ResParty (IA)	SoF	Atlas Budget Account Code	Input	Amount (USD) Year 1 (2009)	Amount (USD) Year 2 (2010)	Amount (USD) Year 3 (2011)	Amount (USD) Year 4 (2012)	Amount (USD) Year 5 (2013)	Total (USD)	Budget Notes
OUTCOME 1: PA system of Kazakhstan contains representative samples of steppe ecosystem under various conservation management regimes and is effective in protecting ecosystems and ecological processes	FHC	GEF	71200	International Consultants	40 750	22 000	0	40 750	0	103 500	PA mngt & landscape planning
		GEF	71300	Local Consultants	41 667	36 667	26 000	31 000	26 000	161 333	Socio-economic and legal analysis
		GEF	72100	Contractual Services - Companies	23 500	23 500	0	0	0	47 000	
		GEF	71600	Travel	9 600	6 000	15 000	16 000	7 000	53 600	
		GEF	72400	Communic&AudioVisual Equip	1 500	1 500	1 500	1 500	1 500	7 500	
		GEF	74500	Miscellaneous Expenses	1 467	1 400	1 400	1 400	1 400	7 067	
						SUBTOTAL	118 484	91 067	43 900	90 650	35 900
OUTCOME 2: Tools for landscape-level steppe conservation planning and management are developed and implemented by key stakeholders	FHC	GEF	71200	International Consultants	0	18 750	18 750	0	0	37 500	PA Mngt Expert
		GEF	71300	Local Consultants	0	0	0	10 667	0	10 667	Legal expert
		GEF	71400	Contractual Services - Individ	26 000	26 000	26 000	26 000	26 000	130 000	PA and landscape planning (2.2, 2.3)
		GEF	72600	Grants	200 000	200 000	200 000	101 833	0	701 833	Grant to ACBK to implement Outcome 2
						SUBTOTAL	226 000	244 750	244 750	138 500	26 000
OUTCOME 3: Improved conservation effectiveness through enhanced systemic, institutional and individual capacities	FHC	GEF	71200	International Consultants	0	30 000	18 000	30 000	18 000	96 000	PA financing, MTE, FE
		GEF	71300	Local Consultants	3 000	28 833	38 333	26 333	11 333	107 833	MTE, FE, PA Fin, Comm, KM, HR, Env Eco
		GEF	71600	Travel	13 000	19 500	24 500	19 500	20 000	96 500	
		GEF	72100	Contractual Services - Companies	12 000	123 000	78 000	58 000	28 000	299 000	ENO, TEO, PRA trainings, BD monitoring
		GEF	72200	Equipment and Furniture	9 000	10 000	0	0	0	19 000	
		GEF	72400	Communic&AudioVisual	2 000	3 000	3 000	3 000	2 000	13 000	

			Equip								
	GEF	72500	Supplies	2 500	2 800	2 800	2 800	2 500	13 400		
	GEF	72800	Information Technology Equipmt	7 000	0	0	0	0	7 000		
	GEF	73100	Rental&Maintenance-Premises	4 000	4 000	4 000	4 000	3 500	19 500		
	GEF	73400	Rental&Maintenance of Other Equip	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	1 000	5 000		
	GEF	74200	Printing & Publications, Transl, Video	8 120	10 620	11 620	11 620	8 120	50 100		
	GEF	74500	Miscellaneous Expenses	2 867	2 700	2 700	2 700	2 700	13 667		
			SUBTOTAL	64 487	235 453	183 953	158 953	97 153	740 000		
Project Management	GEF	71400	Contractual Services-Individ	31 200	31 200	31 200	31 200	31 200	156 000	Project Manager and Project Assistant	
	GEF	71600	Travel	3 700	3 700	3 700	3 700	3 700	18 500		
	UNDP	71600	Travel (M&E)	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	25 000		
	GEF	72200	Equipment and Furniture	16 000	0	0	0	0	16 000		
	GEF	72400	Communic&AudioVisual Equip	3 600	3 600	3 600	3 600	3 600	18 000		
	GEF	74500	Miscellaneous Expenses	1 300	1 300	1 300	1 300	1 300	6 500		
				SUBTOTAL (GEF)	55 800	39 800	39 800	39 800	39 800	215 000	
				SUBTOTAL (UNDP)	5 000	25 000					
			SUBTOTAL	60 800	44 800	44 800	44 800	44 800	240 000		
			TOTAL (GEF)	464 771	611 070	512 403	427 903	198 853	2 215 000		
			TOTAL (UNDP)	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	25 000		
			PROJECT TOTAL	469 771	616 070	517 403	432 903	203 853	2 240 000		

TOTAL BUDGET SUMMARY

GEF	464 771	611 070	512 403	427 903	198 853	2 215 000
UNDP Country Office Astana	10 000	10 000	10 000	10 000	10 000	50 000
Forestry and Hunting Committee	4 108 660	4 108 660	4 108 660	4 108 660	4 108 660	20 543 300
Land Management Agency	16 000	16 000	16 000	16 000	16 000	80 000
ACBK	88 000	88 000	88 000	88 000	88 000	440 000
RSPB	86 000	86 000	86 000	86 000	86 000	430 000
SUBTOTAL co-financing	4 773 431	4 919 730	4 821 063	4 736 563	4 507 513	21 543 300
GRAND TOTAL						23 758 300

SECTION IV: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PART I: Other agreements

The Letters of Cofinancing are attached as separate files.

PART II: Terms of References for key project staff and main sub-contracts

The ToRs for key project staff and consultants are presented in Annex C of the CEO Endorsement Document

PART III: Stakeholder Involvement Plan

Stakeholder identification

Table 6 below describes the major categories of stakeholders and their involvement in the project.

Information dissemination, consultation, and similar activities that occurred during PPG

A series of consultations took place in Astana, Almaty and at field level during the PPG involving most of the stakeholders listed in **Table 6**. The consultation process was led by ACBK, which is the largest conservation NGO in Kazakhstan. The process consisted of discussions with national and local-level officials of the various government ministries and agencies listed in **Table 6**. Substantial attention was also paid to coordinating with international partners such as RSPB and GTZ.

Activities planned during implementation and evaluation

The process of expanding protected areas is required by law to involve a wide range of national and local-level branches of government. At the local level, there is potential for the involvement of stakeholders on the rural district, rayon, and oblast levels in steppe conservation. This approach has previously been demonstrated in Korgalzhyn, where a 4-5 month process ensured the inclusion of all agencies in the decision to expand the PA. This type of approach will foster a sense of inclusion in the decision-making process. Once approval to expand is received at the oblast level, then expansion activities can take effect.

Outcome 2 in particular will involve local communities, who will have a central role in efforts to develop wildlife corridors and buffer zones in landscape areas surrounding key PAs.

Long-term stakeholder participation

One of the project's aims is to ensure that there will be long-term involvement in decision making and implementation. This will be encouraged through support to the development of co-management models and through the development of mechanisms for management of wildlife corridors.

Social issues

Lots of people of the Kazakh steppes have left their lands in the last years due to a collapse of social and economic infrastructure. The rate of unemployment is high. A lot of local people are still emigrating or depend on secondary income through poaching of saiga or other animals. Especially young people without perspectives become poachers.

The project can provide alternatives to those poor local land users through employment by protected areas, promotion of alternative land uses and tourism.

Corridor and PA management planning are participatory processes. Management plans are going to be developed with the participation of focus groups involving farmers, wildlife users and women.

Table 6: Stakeholders and their roles

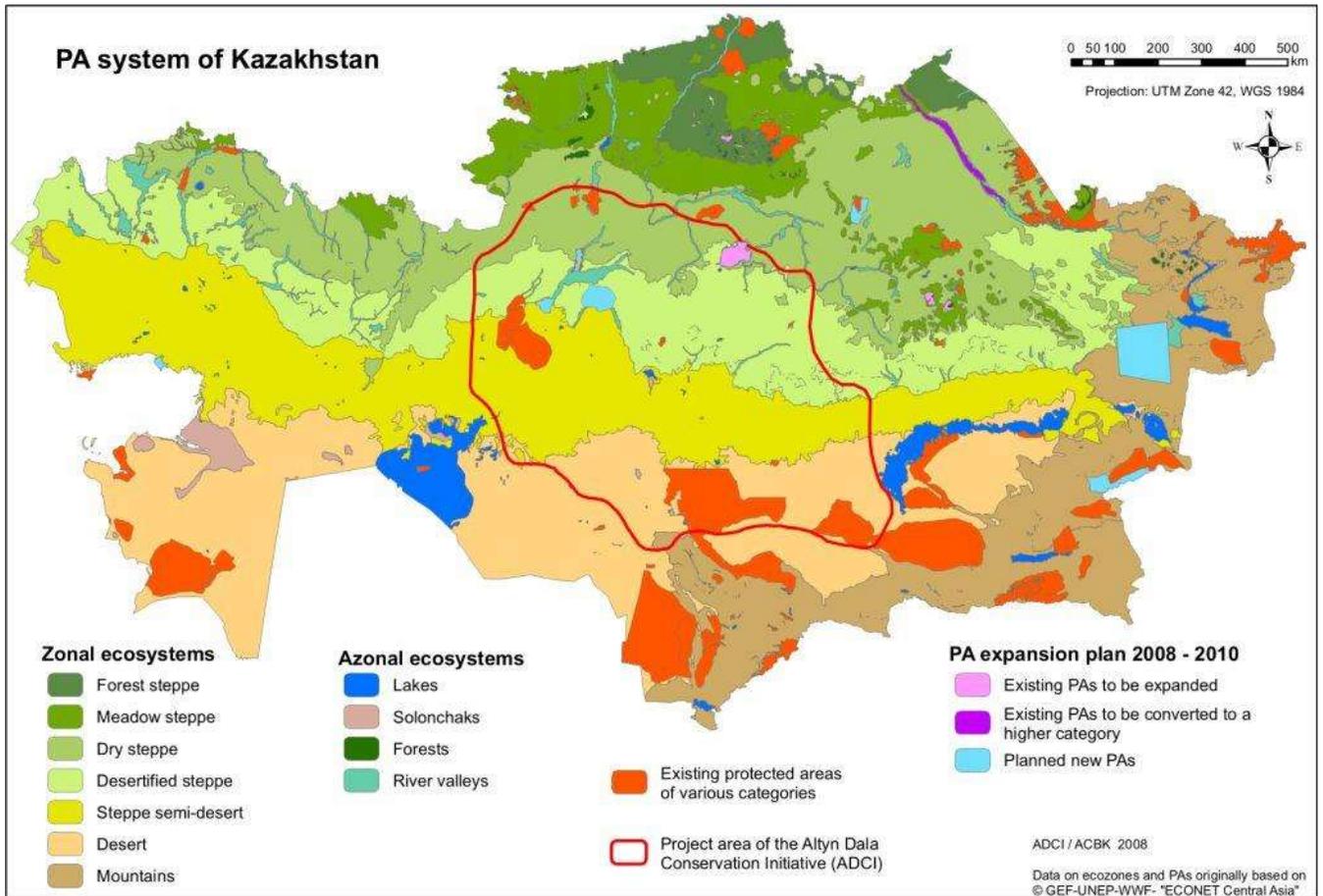
Stakeholder	Description	Role in project implementation
1. National partners		
<p>Ministry of Agriculture: Committee on Forestry and Hunting (CFH) and its territorial organs in Akmola, Aktyubinsk, Kostanai, Karaganda, Pavlodar and East Kazakhstan areas.</p>	<p>Special executive and control-monitoring functions in the fields of forestry, protection of reproduction and use of fauna (except for fish and other aquatic animals) and protected areas. Makes recommendations, develops legislation, approves studies, manages PAs, and cooperates internationally.</p>	<p>CFH will be involved in the joint development of steppe conservation initiatives, and will also play a role in the development of sustainable use alternatives.</p>
<p>Ministry of Agriculture: Committee of Water Resources and its territorial organizations (Irtysh, Ishim, Nura-Sarysu and Tobol-Torgai River Basin Organizations).</p>	<p>This Committee is responsible for management of water resources, which are a critical natural resource in dry ecosystems such as steppe and semi-desert. Many wetlands are artificial (including ones in ITZ area) and it is important to maintain appropriate water levels in those wetlands.</p>	<p>The same as CFH, albeit with respect to use of water resources within the steppe zone</p>
<p>Ministry of Agriculture: Protected area administrations</p>	<p>Administrations of existing and to-be-established PAs within the steppe zone</p>	<p>Direct beneficiaries of capacity building efforts.</p>
<p>Ministry of Environment Protection (MEP): Department of Sustainable Development and Security</p>	<p>Responsible for developing state policies and programs on environmental conservation and sustainable development, and to coordinate with the secretary of the CBD convention. Kazakhstan is a signatory to 22 international nature protection conventions, including the convention on Biodiversity Conservation, the RAMSAR Convention, the Bonn Convention (having also signed a MoU concerning the protection of Saiga along with Uzbekistan and Mongolia), and CITES.</p> <p>MEP and Oblast branches of MEP are responsible for Environmental</p>	<p>Contribute to the project by making joint decisions on steppe conservation activities and by linking steppe conservation actions with Kazakhstan's commitments to international conventions.</p> <p>The Environmental Information Center shall merge the data of the monitoring and knowledge management system, process this information and provide it to planners</p>

Stakeholder	Description	Role in project implementation
	<p>impact assessments, which are needed for any of the planned activities related to conservation or use of nature resources.</p> <p>The MEP hosts the Environmental Information Center, which develops GIS-based layers to inform planning processes.</p>	<p>as the Agency for Land Resources Management.</p>
Oblast Akimats	<p>Responsible for establishing and management of PA of local importance. Allocation of land for planned PA of republican importance has to be done by oblast akimats.</p>	<p>The oblast Akimats play an important role in the establishment of PAs. They need to agree on land allocation.</p> <p>Secondly they will play an important role on corridor management, land use planning and zoning. Therefore a cooperation between different oblast, especially in the ITZ will be crucial.</p>
Rayon Akimats	<p>Rayon akimats have to agree on allocation of land for planned PA of republican and local importance.</p>	<p>The rayon Akimats need to agree on land allocation for the establishment of new PAs.</p> <p>The need to participate in corridor planning processe.</p>
Village Akimats	<p>Play important role for allocation of lands for land users and for sustainable land management.</p>	<p>Will participate in corridor and PA management planning processes. Especially in the identification of sustainable land use practices and zoning.</p>
Agency for Land Resources Management	<p>The Agency is responsible for development and implementation of state policy and programmes on land use planning and land management, geodesy and cartography.</p>	<p>Oblast-level branches of the Agency for Land Resources Management will be responsible for key decisions related to zoning and allocation of land use permits for agriculture, mining, etc at oblast level.</p>
Ministry of Economics and Budget Scheduling	<p>Approves national budgets, develops the country's economic sectors, and promotes the effective realization of social and economic</p>	<p>The Ministry of Economics will consult and recommend economic incentives for</p>

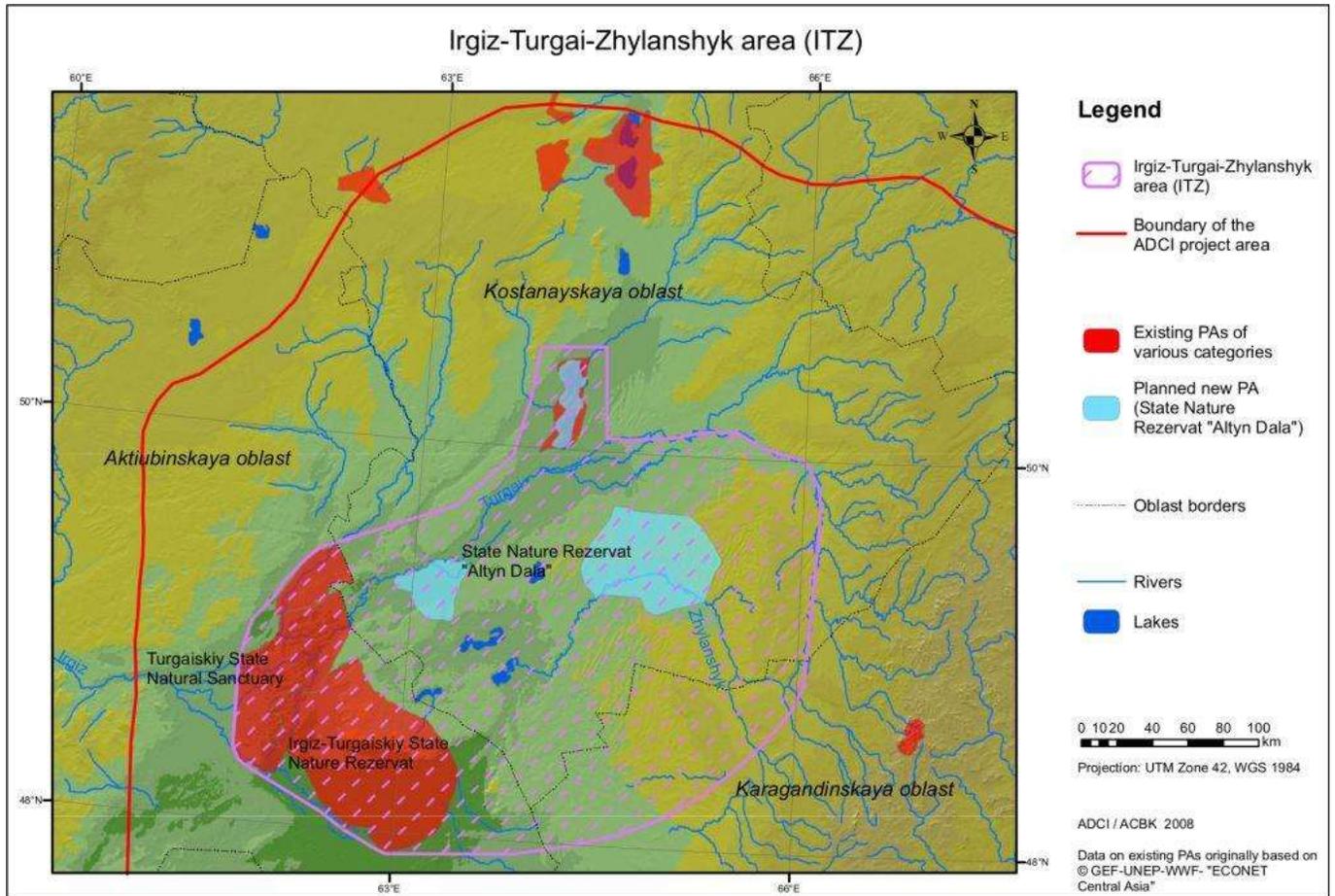
Stakeholder	Description	Role in project implementation
	development priorities.	conserving steppe ecosystems and will provide financial advice and monitoring of investment projects related to steppe conservation.
Hydrometeorological Centre	Research centre for hydrometeorology	The Centre will participate in consultations, discussions, and joint decision-making related to the degradation of steppe ecosystems connected to climate change.
Ministry of Education and Sciences	Conducts research on all aspects of the natural environment and on the sustainable use of the steppe zone.	The Ministry will play a scientific advisory role in the project.
Scientific and production associations (non-government research and analytical center “Laboratory of Wild Nature”; Ecomuseum Association, Ecomuseum BioNet Association	Work with local NGOs communities to conserve and restore biodiversity in selected locations. Promote the use of biodiversity friendly alternative energy sources. Research and biodiversity conservation activities. Support PA operations, provide expert assistance to PA staff. Actively engage students in biodiversity conservation work within PAs and outside their territories	Will strengthen the positive participation of NGOs and local communities, and act as the outreach arm of the project. Will also promote sustainable resource use among local people.
ACBK	Currently ACBK is the largest conservation NGO in Kazakhstan and runs several conservation programmes and projects. These include programmes for Identification and conservation of IBA in Kazakhstan, as well as the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative.	It is planned that ACBK will be executing Outcome 2 of the project as well as other outputs related to in-situ conservation activities and developing of PA system.
Okhotzooptom State Enterprise (operating under CFH)	Okhotzooptom is responsible for management of four State Reserved Zones and conservation of rare and threatened species of wild ungulates and saiga. Implements the State programme “The Programme for Conservation and Restoration of Rare and Threatened Species of Wild Ungulates and Saiga 2005 – 2007”.	It is planned that Okhotzooptom will be participating in steppe ecological monitoring and knowledge management, establishment and management of wildlife corridors and associated modalities for landscape-level planning.

Stakeholder	Description	Role in project implementation
2. International partners		
RSPB	Currently RSPB, in cooperation with ACBK, is developing an IBA programme for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Partner of the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative.	RSPB is willing to support IBA related activities within project territory and activities related to ADCI goals.
FZS	Partner of the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative	FZS will support activities related to ADCI goals.
WWF	Partner of the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative	WWF will support activities related to ADCI goals.
GTZ	Currently GTZ is starting a project called “Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Conservation of Biodiversity in Central Asia.”	GTZ will be the partner organization for assisting on developing of new methods for encouraging community-level participation on wildlife management and landscape-level conservation mechanisms.

PART IV: MAP 1. PA system of Kazakhstan by Ecological Zones



MAP 2: Iriz-Turgai-Zhylanshyk Pilot Area



SIGNATURE PAGE

Country: Kazakhstan

UNDAF Outcome(s)/Indicator(s): Reduced (income and human) poverty at national and sub-national levels

Expected Outcome(s)/Indicator (s): Outcome 2. A comprehensive approach to sustainable development is integrated into national development planning and linked to poverty

Expected Output(s)/Indicator(s): Output 2.2 Expanded collaboration between government, donors, civil society and the private sector in the area of environmental management and sustainable development

Implementing partner: *Forestry and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture of RK*

Other Partners: *UNDP
ACBK*

Programme Period: 2005-2009
 Programme Component: Environment
 Project Title: Steppe Conservation and Management
 Project ID: PIMS # 3835
 Atlas Award: 00050708
 Atlas Project ID: 00062761
 Project Duration: 5 years
 Management Arrangement: NEX

Total budget: US\$ 23,758,300
 Allocated resources (**cash**):

- GEF US\$ 2,215,000
- UNDP US\$ 25,000
- Government US\$ 10,301,650
- NGOs US\$ 570,000
- **In kind contributions:**
- UNDP US\$ 25,000
- Government US\$ 10,321,650
- NGOs US\$ 300,000

Forestry and Hunting Committee
of the MoA RK

Nauruzbai Khadyrkeev, Chair

Date

United Nations Development
Program

Haoliang Xu, UNDP Resident Representative

Date