

**UNDP/GEF Project “Conservation of Tugai
Forest and Strengthening Protected Areas
System in the Amu Darya Delta of
Karakalpakstan”**

TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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JANUARY 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Evaluation Report is based on information obtained from documents reviewed, websites visited, consultations and field visits. We wish to acknowledge the help and support we received from the Project Management Unit and from the Environment and Energy Unit of UNDP, with the location and accessing of documents, arrangements for meetings and interviews, and logistics for site visits. We also wish to thank all those in Karakalpakstan and in Tashkent, who met with us and shared their personal perspectives of the project with us. Finally, we wish to thank those who sent us comments on the draft Report – all the comments received have been taken into account in the production of this Final Report.

Thank you

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFA	Administration and Finance Assistant
BR	Biosphere Reserve
CO	Country Office (of UNDP)
CoFin	Co-financing
DSA	Daily Stipendiary Allowance (also known as Per Diem)
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Global Information System
GU	Government of Uzbekistan
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
LogFrame	Logical Framework Matrix
MAWR	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MSP	Medium-sized Project (GEF terminology)
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEX	National Execution (of UNDP projects)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NP	National Park
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NTC	National Technical Coordinator
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PA	Protected Area
PB	Project Board
PDF	Project Development Facility
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RK	Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor (of UNDP/GEF)
SCNP	State Committee for Nature Protection (also known as Goskompriroda)
SGP	Small Grants Programme (of the GEF)
SMART	Specific, Measureable, Attributable, Relevant, Timebound, Tracked and Targeted
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VCC	Village Citizens Council
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature (previously World Wildlife Fund)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Project

This is the independent Terminal Evaluation of the UNDP/GEF/Government of Karakalpakstan Medium-Sized Project “*Conservation of Tugai Forest and Strengthening Protected Areas System in the Amu Darya Delta of Karakalpakstan*”.

The **Project Objective** was “*To strengthen the Karakalpakstan system of protected areas*”

It also had five Outcomes as follows:

- **Outcome 1:** “*A new mixed use protected area (a NP or Biosphere Reserve) established and fully incorporated into the Karakalpakstan protected areas system*”
- **Outcome 2:** “*An improved legal and regulatory framework and a better understanding of biodiversity values enable institutions, farmers and other stakeholders to manage the protected areas system in a sustainable manner*”
- **Outcome 3:** “*New viable co-management approaches and sustainable land use practices within NP/BR buffer zone are demonstrated and documented for further replication*”
- **Outcome 4:** “*Local and regional government institutions and NGOs have the capacity to effectively manage the NP/BR and support sustainable approaches to natural resource utilization*”
- **Outcome 5:** “*Lessons and best practices on biodiversity conservation in Tugai protected area are replicated throughout the protected areas system in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan as a whole*”

The Project had a total budget (including cash co-financing) of US\$1,188,000. Implementation commenced in October 2005 and was planned to run for five years. Following the MTE it was extended by 16 months with project closure scheduled for 31 December 2011. It was implemented by UNDP-Uzbekistan as the GEF Implementing Agency and executed by the Karakalpak State Committee for Nature Protection. The latter, together with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, particularly the Department of Forestry, comprise the key stakeholders.

The Evaluation

This evaluation has been conducted in accordance with the monitoring and evaluation policy of the GEF. It has been guided by, and has applied, the principles as set out in UNDP/GEF guidance. Like all GEF Terminal Evaluations, this TE is being carried out:

- To promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose levels of project accomplishments;
- To synthesize lessons that may help improve the selection, design and implementation of future GEF activities;
- To provide feedback on issues that are recurrent across the portfolio and need attention, and on improvements regarding previously identified issues; and,
- To contribute to the GEF Evaluation Office databases for aggregation, analysis and reporting on effectiveness of GEF operations in achieving global environmental benefits and on quality of monitoring and evaluation across the GEF system.

The approach adopted was participatory which, while safeguarding the independence of the Evaluators, included self-assessments by the Project Management Unit. A six-point rating system was applied to elements of the Project, in particular on progress towards the Objective and Outcomes.

Key Findings and Conclusions

CRITERION	CONCLUSIONS	RATING
PROJECT FORMULATION		
Concept and design	By not building activities around the root causes directly, project design may have addressed the symptoms rather than the causes and its benefits could be short-lived	MS
Stakeholder participation in project formulation	Stakeholders were involved extensively in project formulation activities through consultation, workshops and commenting on drafts	S
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
Project governance	The high number of members from the local government and community levels is a very positive element in project governance and the PSC has worked well	S
Project management and administration	Implementation of the Project appears to have been effective, with a particularly well-organised and highly motivated project team overseen by strong leadership.	S
Implementation Approach		
The LogFrame and adaptive management	Following the Inception Workshop the LogFrame did not change and there is not much evidence of adaptive management	MS
Stakeholder participation in implementation	Project design provided for the full involvement of stakeholders in the site and boundaries identification, the determination of zonation and regime definitions, management planning and implementation	S
Information management	Information management by the project has been adequate and it has put in place an effective Information Centre	S
Risk management	The project managed to avert the risks associated with acceptance of the concept of a Biosphere Reserve, however, other risks remain and could place the effectiveness of the Biosphere Reserve in jeopardy	MS
Project finances		
Financial planning and management	While the project has stayed within budget in spite of an extension of more than one year, the drastic revisions and reallocation of funds between Outcomes and Project Admin/Management, led the latter being almost a third of the total project budget	MS
Co-financing	Remaining co-fin cash is of some concern, but the PMU advises that it will be spent (during the next five weeks) for purchasing equipment for the Biosphere Reserve and we find that co-fin has been managed well	S
Monitoring and Evaluation		
M&E design, plan and budget	The project is fully compliant with the M&E requirements of the GEF regarding M&E planning and budgeting	S
Protected area monitoring	The trend in METT scores is a very positive one and this is almost certainly as a result of the project interventions	S
PROJECT RESULTS : Achievement of Objective and attainment of Outcomes, with reference to the Indicators		
Objective: To strengthen the Karakalpakstan system of protected areas	Taking the Indicators as a gauge of achievement of the Objective, accepting the PMU self-assessment, reflecting what the Evaluators evidenced in field visits to project sites, the protected areas system of Karakalpakstan is considered to be stronger as a result of the project.	S
Outcome 1: A new mixed use protected area (a NP or Biosphere Reserve) established and fully incorporated into the Karakalpakstan protected areas system	The project has minor shortcomings in the achievement of this Outcome, in terms of effectiveness and efficiency as well as sustainability	S
Outcome 2: An improved legal and regulatory framework and a better understanding of biodiversity values enable institutions, farmers and other stakeholders to manage the protected areas system in a sustainable manner	The results focus on capacity building, raising of awareness, and carbon sequestration. Legal and regulatory framework not addressed and while the project's work with the school system is highly commendable, it does not extend to farmers and other stakeholders being able to manage the PA system	MS
Outcome 3: New viable co-management approaches and sustainable land use practices	The Evaluators recognize the sheer volume of work carried out by the project under this outcome, but we have some concerns	MS

CRITERION	CONCLUSIONS	RATING
within NP/BR buffer zone are demonstrated and documented for further replication	about the methods used and the interpretation of “co-management”	
Outcome 4: Local and regional government institutions and NGOs have the capacity to effectively manage the NP/BR and support sustainable approaches to natural resource utilization	The Outcome specifically sought capacity in place to effectively manage, and while the project carried out training there is no indication that the required result has been achieved. The Visitor Centre is still under development (so close to project closure) and appeared to be aiming for a passive display approach	MU
Outcome 5: Lessons and best practices on biodiversity conservation in Tugai protected area are replicated throughout the protected areas system in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan as a whole	Outcome wording is over ambitious – cannot be achieved within project lifetime. Project has carried out much facilitation towards replication, and served as a catalyst for PA management, but not much replication and certainly not to the extent targeted by the Outcome	MS
Relevance, Effectiveness and Sustainability		
Relevance	The project satisfies the UNDP definition of relevance. It is consistent with national and local priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries. However, the project design is not a perfect match with the needs as identified in the ProDoc in the form of threats, root causes and barriers. And, while Project implementers went further than the project design and addressed threats and root causes more directly, they still did not cover the whole spectrum	S
Effectiveness	The project was effective in obtaining the declaration of a BR, but the area designated is smaller than originally envisaged; awareness has been effectively increased, but the project has not been effective with the legislation framework; project has effectively demonstrated and tested new approaches but their effectiveness towards sustainability may be in question; the project has been effective in carrying out the training, but the effectiveness of application remains to be seen; the project has only been partly effective in its facilitation of replication	MS
Institutional sustainability	Good level of institutional commitment at central government and Hokimiyat level but although the decree setting up the BR has been passed, a lot of work is still required before sustainability can become reality, especially in the areas of BR planning and management, sustainable land use, and the implementation of co-management	ML
Financial sustainability	The only financial sustainability observed by the Evaluators was in the SMEs established with project help in the private sector; however, a commitment by key stakeholders augurs well for the future	ML
Ecological sustainability	Within the Badai Tugai Zapovednik ecological sustainability is Moderately Likely. However in the buffer and transition zones it is far from assured. It is unknown whether the responsible institutions have the capacity and the know-how to implement true co-management, and monitor and support compliant farmers and other land owners who require guidance on how to manage their land in harmony with the BR principles and requirements	ML/MU
OVERALL CONCLUSION AND PROJECT RATING	By the end of the project, the Protected Areas system of Karakalpakstan will be stronger as a result of the project. Therefore the project will have achieved its Objective. However, since this is a foundational project, its real benefits will be on a very limited scale and the project relies on others to replicate and upscale its results to a significant level. The pilots tested by the project and the demonstration models it has set up, enhance the chances of replication, but other barriers remain.	MS

Recommendations

The same numbering of each recommendation as in the main text of the report is used below in order to ensure consistency when referring to any recommendation.

6.2.1 Recommendation addressed to the PMU, Government and UNDP

Issue: Sustainability of project benefits

The project does not have a Sustainability Plan or Exit Strategy (although UNDP has follow-up plans, which are not the same) and its gains may be in jeopardy unless this is rectified.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the project should organize a Sustainability Workshop inviting all known stakeholders and others who may have an interest in the project's products, services and other benefits. At the Workshop, the PMU will outline the gains made by the project and seek an expression of interest from specific stakeholders for taking over and sustaining each gain. Ideally, this should be followed by an official exchange of letters handing over, and accepting, the responsibility.

6.2.2 Recommendation addressed to the PMU, Government and UNDP

Issue: Handing over of vehicles and equipment

As is the normal procedure at project closure, the project is in the process of handing over its assets to various organizations.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that in disposing of its assets, the project give priority to those organizations that are to continue with its work and sustain its benefits. This should be tied closely with the process recommended in 6.2.1 above.

6.2.3 Recommendation addressed to the PMU

Issue: Information management

The project has generated a good amount of data, information and knowledge some of which has been put out in publications, however, a lot is only found in electronic format and not readily accessible.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that in the same way as for vehicles and equipment, the PMU should identify an organization that is to inherit its data, information and knowledge. This cache must be well organized and handed over together with the associated hardware and software. An undertaking must be obtained that the cache must be made accessible to all who require it for the better management of Protected Areas, in particular Tugai ecosystems.

6.2.4 Recommendation addressed to the Government

Issue: Co-management of PAs

The project misinterpreted co-management which is meant to be the management of protected areas in a true and meaningful partnership between the authorities and the community. The need for this is now crucial with the adoption of buffer zones and transition zones which apply to land that has been inhabited by communities and on which they depend for their livelihood and quality of life.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that as part of the Protected Areas Strategy (see 6.2.5 below), the Government should remove the barriers that may exist to true partnerships with communities. This facilitation of co-management should range from a solid legal basis to physical and practical provisions.

6.2.5 Recommendation addressed to the Government and UNDP

Issue: National Protected Areas Strategy for Uzbekistan

The current Protected Areas System in Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan is mainly comprised of a number of elements without a clear overall vision, objectives or a cohesive approach. The project has prepared the way for replication of its approaches, pilots and demonstrations.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Government, with the assistance and support of UNDP, should strive to develop, adopt and implement a National Protected Areas Strategy with a focus on representativeness, robustness, and ecological integrity. Successful approaches, philosophies and procedures from this project can be applied across the Protected Areas System in Karakalpakstan and Uzbekistan.

6.2.6 Recommendation addressed to UNDP

Issue: Follow-up intervention

The project benefits will be on a very limited scale and the project relies on others to replicate and upscale its results to a significant level. A follow-up intervention is required to secure the investment made by the GEF and UNDP.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that UNDP proceed with its plans to carry out a follow-up intervention. Such an intervention should first create a bridge between this project and the next in the form of a sustainability plan (including the Sustainability Workshop). It should then focus on developing a National Protected Areas strategy and addressing the root causes not addressed by the project.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The Project

1.1.1 Project vision and goals

The overall goal of the UNDP/GEF Project “*Conservation of Tugai Forest and Strengthening Protected Areas System in the Amu Darya Delta of Karakalpakstan*” was the “*conservation of the globally significant biodiversity of the Southern Aral Sea Zone of the Republic of Karakalpakstan through the demonstration of new approaches to the conservation and management of biodiversity and natural resources in and around protected areas*”. The Project Document was signed between the State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and UNDP Uzbekistan in August 2005 and according to PIR-2007, the first disbursement signalling project start was in October 2005. The project was planned to last five years.

According to the Project Document (ProDoc), the project was designed to introduce effective conservation and sustainable land use practices in the riverine forest areas of Karakalpakstan, thereby preventing loss of nationally and globally important biodiversity and reduction or reversal of land degradation. The project was also expected to provide a demonstration of appropriate approaches for conservation and sustainable land use which would be applicable to other riverine areas of Uzbekistan and the region as a whole. A new protected area was to be established in the Republic of Karakalpakstan that would contribute to strengthening the overall coverage and representativeness of the national protected areas system. The project’s strategic interventions were aimed to build capacity within both conservation agencies and natural resource management agencies (water managers, forestry, agriculture, local government, etc) important for the long-term sustainability of natural resources and protected area management in Karakalpakstan. The project was also to test and demonstrate new and more sustainable uses of biodiversity and natural resources in and around the established protected area thereby contributing to its long term viability and also providing crucial replicable models for initiatives possible at other PAs in the region. In addition to the strategic priority benefits within the Karakalpak Republic the project was expected to generate wider benefits and lessons for the Uzbekistan protected areas system as a whole, particularly in the context of riverine and wetlands protected areas management and sustainability.

1.1.2 Objective and Outcomes of the project

The **Project Objective** was “*To strengthen the Karakalpakstan system of protected areas*”¹

It also had five Outcomes as follows:

- **Outcome 1:** “*A new mixed use protected area (a NP or Biosphere Reserve) established and fully incorporated into the Karakalpakstan protected areas system*”
- **Outcome 2:** “*An improved legal and regulatory framework and a better understanding of biodiversity values enable institutions, farmers and other stakeholders to manage the protected areas system in a sustainable manner*”
- **Outcome 3:** “*New viable co-management approaches and sustainable land use practices within NP/BR buffer zone are demonstrated and documented for further replication*”
- **Outcome 4:** “*Local and regional government institutions and NGOs have the capacity to effectively manage the NP/BR and support sustainable approaches to natural resource utilization*”
- **Outcome 5:** “*Lessons and best practices on biodiversity conservation in Tugai protected area are replicated throughout the protected areas system in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan as a whole*”

¹ The original Objective was somewhat wordy and the Inception Workshop concluded that “*definitions of the project objective can be simplified*” and adopted the critical target from the original wording, leaving out the descriptive text.

1.1.3 Main stakeholders

The main stakeholders in Karakalpakstan are the State Committee for Nature Protection and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, particularly the Department of Forestry. In addition, a broad range of regional and local stakeholders were involved in project formulation, including the Karakalpakstan Council of Ministers, the Institute of Bioecology of Karakalpak Academy of Sciences, a number of Nukus based NGOs, local level Khokims, local forest enterprises and protected area managers.

The ProDoc lists the following as the major organizations interested in the project, together with their particular area of interest:

Government institutions:

1. The State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic of Karakalpakstan (Goskompriroda) – Tugai conservation works;
2. Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of RK – forestry works in the project area;
3. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of RK – job creation, credits for family businesses in rural areas (500-600 thousand soum);
4. The Ministry of Economy of RK – data management system creation;
5. Khokimiyats in the project area – all types of assistance and support (organisational, logistics, informational, etc.).

Non-governmental organizations:

1. The regional office of the International Joint Development Association – micro-funding, training in computers, medico-sanitary training of public health staff, humanitarian assistance (supply of food and clothes), installation of hand pumps, rehabilitation of “ECOS” systems;
2. The Republican Chamber of Businessmen and Producers - support of business initiatives; training; production of education materials (business consultations, business plans, feasibility studies, methodological literature, etc.); effective planning, management, and policy in the field of unemployment and poverty elimination and business development;
3. Micro-financial training centre. UNDP micro-credit project;
4. The “Consulting-Training” Company - selection of business ideas; development of business characteristics; marketing – how to work at the market; business planning; legal forms of business;
5. Counterpart Consortium – Uzbekistan - skilled trainers for training delivery in the country and training curricula for local communities;
6. NGO “Daulet” is working in the framework of Soros Foundation’s project (training in micro-credit management) and participates as a partner in UNDP regional projects;
7. NGO “Eco-Priaralie” – high-quality consultations and expertise in the following areas: water use, economics, sociological studies, monitoring, data management system creation;
8. The Republican Association of Hunters and Fishers – creation of a pheasant farm (10-15 new jobs), designation and development of game areas in Beruniy and Bozatau districts (new jobs);
9. CHOSON Joint Venture (with Korea) – liquorice root farming (new jobs) and eco-tourism (new jobs).

Stakeholder involvement in project formulation and implementation is discussed below in sections 1.3.2 and 3.3.

1.2 The Evaluation

1.2.1 The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Principles

In accordance with the monitoring and evaluation policy of the GEF², this evaluation is guided by, and has applied, the following principles:

Independence The Evaluators are independent and have not been engaged in the Project activities, nor were they responsible in the past for the design, implementation or supervision of the project.

Impartiality The Evaluators endeavoured to provide a comprehensive and balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the project. The evaluation process has been impartial in all stages and taken into account all the views received from stakeholders.

Transparency The Evaluators conveyed in as open a manner as possible the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied and the intended use of the findings. This evaluation report aims to provide transparent information on its sources, methodologies and approach.

Disclosure This report serves as a mechanism through which the findings and lessons identified in the evaluation are disseminated to policymakers, operational staff, beneficiaries, the general public and other stakeholders.

Ethical The Evaluators have respected the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and the sources of specific information and opinions in this report are not disclosed except where necessary and then only after confirmation with the consultee.

Competencies and Capacities The credentials of the Evaluators in terms of their expertise, seniority and experience as required by the terms of reference (Annex 1) are provided in Annex 2; and the methodology used for the assessment of results and performance is described below (section 1.3).

Credibility This evaluation has been based on data and observations which are considered reliable and dependable with reference to the quality of instruments and procedures and analysis used to collect and interpret information.

Utility The Evaluators strived to be as well-informed as possible and this ensuing report is considered as relevant, timely and as concise as possible. In an attempt to be of maximum benefit to stakeholders, the report presents in a complete and balanced way the evidence, findings and issues, conclusions and recommendations.

1.2.2 Evaluation objectives and Terms of Reference

According to the ToRs, *the overall goal of the evaluation is to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of project activities in relation to the stated objective so far, and to produce possible recommendations on its completion strategy.*

The purpose of the Evaluation is:

- *To assess overall performance against the Project objectives as set out in Project Document and other related documents;*
- *To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Project;*
- *To critically analyze the implementation and management arrangements of the Project;*
- *To assess the sustainability of the Project's interventions;*

² Global Environment Facility (2006) *The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy.*

- To list and document initial lessons concerning Project design, implementation and management;
- To assess Project relevance to national priorities.

Project performance will be measured based on Project Logical Framework which provides clear performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification.

Like all GEF Terminal Evaluations, this TE is being carried out:

- To promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose levels of project accomplishments;
- To synthesize lessons that may help improve the selection, design and implementation of future GEF activities;
- To provide feedback on issues that are recurrent across the portfolio and need attention, and on improvements regarding previously identified issues; and,
- To contribute to the GEF Evaluation Office databases for aggregation, analysis and reporting on effectiveness of GEF operations in achieving global environmental benefits and on quality of monitoring and evaluation across the GEF system.

A more specific list of tasks expected of the TE is in the ToRs in Annex 1.

The Evaluation Team set about attempting to provide answers to the following questions:

- Did the project achieve its objective and outcomes? (= results)
- Did it do it well? (= implementation process)
- Are the results likely to be sustainable (= impacts and sustainability)

Ultimately, the Terminal Evaluation report will be assessed using the following criteria³:

- The report presents an assessment of all relevant outcomes and achievement of project objectives in the context of the focal area program indicators if applicable.*
- The report was consistent, the evidence presented was complete and convincing, and ratings were well substantiated.*
- The report presented a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes.*
- The lessons and recommendations are supported by the evidence presented and are relevant to the portfolio and future projects.*
- The report included the actual project costs (totals, per activity and per source) and actual cofinancing used.*
- The report included an assessment of the quality of the M&E plan at entry, the M&E system used during implementation, and whether the information generated by the M&E system was used for project management.*

1.2.3 Mission activities and assignment timeline

Work on this assignment commenced from homebase in early November 2011 with planning and documents review, and the team assembled in Tashkent on 18 November. The first day was taken up with initial briefings and logistics planning and the Evaluators then proceeded to Nukus and visited the Project Implementation Team and various project sites. Following these consultations and a presentation of preliminary findings to the local stakeholders, the Evaluators returned to Tashkent for further consultations and debriefed with UNDP. The in-country mission ended on 26 November.

A Draft Report was made available for comments in early December and distributed by UNDP. Comments received were taken fully into account in producing this final version of the Terminal Evaluation Report by early January 2012.

A full mission schedule and evaluation timeline is in Annex 3.

³ GEF Evaluation Office, *Annual Performance Report 2008*. GEF Council Paper GEF/ME/C.35/Inf. 5, May 28, 2009

1.3 Methodology and approach

Two basic tools were used in the search for primary data and information – firstly documents review, secondly face-to-face consultations. Face-to-face consultations were the preferred method of consultation and were carried out with a wide catchment of stakeholders. Triangulation was used to ensure that empirical evidence collected from one source, for example documentation such as reports, was validated from at least two other sources, for example through interviews or surveys. Sometimes, the information was not available in document form and only available from consultations. In this situation, the Evaluators sought to corroborate opinions expressed and information given, by posing the same questions to more than one consultee. Anecdotal evidence was taken into account only if in the judgment of the Evaluators the information was important and the source was considered reliable. In such cases, the possible limitations of this information are noted.

1.3.1 Documents and websites reviewed and consulted

The Terms of Reference provided an initial list of documents to be reviewed and additional documentation was sought by the Evaluators to provide the background to the project, insights into project implementation and management, a record of project outputs, etc. The Evaluators are grateful to the PMU and UNDP for providing all necessary documents. A desk study review of all relevant documentation and well as websites was carried out and key documents/websites referred to directly in this report are noted in footnotes. The list of salient documents and websites reviewed and/or consulted by the Evaluators is in Annex 4.

1.3.2 Consultation with key stakeholders and beneficiaries

The primary stakeholders for this Project are considered to be UNDP, the Government of Karakalpakstan and the communities of the Tugai ecosystem and the Evaluators held numerous meetings with these key stakeholders. These included Government agencies (both Central and local level), NGOs, community groups and UNDP. The full list of persons consulted is in Annex 5.

The greater majority of stakeholders and beneficiaries were consulted in person and the Evaluators met with and/or consulted 33 individuals in total. Of these, around 50% were from local government and communities.

Without prejudicing the independence of the Evaluators, the approach adopted was a participatory one. In particular, the PMU was seen as a partner in the evaluation process and a number of self-assessments were invited.

The draft report was translated and distributed by the UNDP Country Office for comments and five persons and/or organizations provided comments – these too are listed in Annex 5. An Audit Trail of the Evaluators' response to the comments is available if required by the UNDP Evaluation Office or the GEF.

It is a principle applied by the Evaluators that confidentiality of individual interviewees is maintained to the extent possible. It is felt that in general, the specific sources of specific comments do not add anything to the argument. However, it is sometimes necessary to quote the organization or the institution. If this, inadvertently, indicates an individual, this is regretted and the decision to quote is not taken lightly.

1.3.3 The basis for evaluation

The basis for a terminal evaluation is the ProDoc which is the signed contract for delivery of certain agreed results, products and services. Signatories bind themselves through the ProDoc and are accountable on the basis of the ProDoc. As noted by GEF, *“the results framework included in the project appraisal document submitted to the GEF for approval/endorsement by the CEO establishes project outcome expectations. At the time of project completion, these ex-ante expectations generally form a yard stick for assessment of outcome achievements.”*⁴

However, as the GEF guidance continues, *“in some instances during the course of project implementation the implementing agency may make changes to the results framework.”* This is justified, for example, when the time taken between the ProDoc’s design and formulation and the project’s start influences its appropriateness – hence the examination and review of the ProDoc at the Inception stages when changes are proposed, agreed and approved. In addition, it is also possible that the ProDoc could require further changes during the lifetime of the project to reflect changing circumstances and experience gained. This could take place annually, if necessary.

It would be cumbersome to change the entire ProDoc and have the new version signed afresh, each time these changes are brought about. Instead, the changes take place in the LogFrame which captures the essence of the ProDoc and the project. Such changes to the LogFrame are proposed, discussed, agreed to and approved at the PSC which comprises membership by all the original ProDoc signatories. Annual Work Plans, Quarterly Plans and Reports, are all reliant on the LogFrame, so is a project’s M&E Plan, and so is the annual accounting to the GEF through the APR/PIR or similar instrument. And, so is a terminal evaluation.

If it is found necessary or desirable to drift away from some aspect of the project’s prescription as recorded in the LogFrame, it is a responsibility of the Executing Agency and project management to ensure that such changes are recorded through agreed and approved changes to the LogFrame. The Tugai Project LogFrame is discussed in section 3.4 below.

1.3.4 The rating system

GEF evaluations should ideally focus on impacts but these are invariably long term and rarely can they be seen within the lifetime of a project. However, a project can be rated on the results that it achieves that can be expected to lead to impacts, namely the Outcomes and its Objective. In addition, evaluations are also required to rate certain aspects of a project such as:

- Project concept and design
- Stakeholder participation in project formulation
- Implementation approach
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Stakeholder participation
- Attainment of Outcomes and achievement of Objective
- Relevance, Effectiveness and Sustainability

These aspects, which form the framework of the core sections of this report, are augmented as considered necessary to also address issues that arose during the evaluation.

Each of the various project elements has been rated separately with brief justifications based on findings and so has the project as a whole.

According to GEF guidance⁵, when rating the project’s outcomes, relevance and effectiveness are to be considered as critical criteria – satisfactory performance on relevance and effectiveness is essential to satisfactory performance overall. This means that the overall outcomes rating of the

⁴ GEF Evaluation Office, *Annual Performance Report 2008*. GEF Council Paper GEF/ME/C.35/Inf. 5, May 28, 2009

⁵ *Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations*. Global Environment Facility, Evaluation Office. Evaluation Document No.3. 2008

project may not be higher than the lowest rating on relevance and effectiveness. Thus, to have an overall satisfactory rating for outcomes, the project must have at least satisfactory ratings on both relevance and effectiveness.

The standard GEF six-level rating system was applied, based on the one below which applies to the overall project rating:

Highly Satisfactory (HS): The project has no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

Satisfactory (S): The project has minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): The project has moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): The project has significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

Unsatisfactory (U): The project has major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project has severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

Rating of various elements of the project is necessarily subjective but it is carried out according to GEF guidance and ethics, and based on the past experience of the evaluators. A score of Highly Satisfactory is not common (around 4%)⁶. It can only be applied in situations which are exceptional and when no improvement is possible. At the other end of the scale, a score of Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) is also not common (1%) and the greater part of projects and project elements are rated in the Satisfactory (S) to Moderately Satisfactory (MU) quartile (76%).

1.4 Structure of this report

The Evaluators made an effort to keep this report brief, to the point and easy to understand. It is made up of four substantive parts. Following the executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report, the first part provides the introduction and the background to the assignment. It starts with a brief introduction to the project and it then explains the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used.

The next part is the main substantive part of this report and comprises four inter-related sections. It presents the findings of the evaluation exercise in terms of the basic project concept, design and relevance, its implementation, administration and management, its achievements and limitations, and the relevance of what it achieved, its degree of effectiveness and the potential for sustainability of the products and services that it produced. The findings are based on factual evidence obtained by the Evaluators through document reviews and consultations with stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The third part is the conclusions section which gathers together a summary of the ratings given and conclusions that had been reached throughout the report and augments them to create a cohesive ending arising from the investigation. This section in turn leads to the final section comprising the recommendations.

A number of annexes provide supplementary information.

⁶ GEF Evaluation Office, *Annual Performance Report 2008*. GEF Council Paper GEF/ME/C.35/Inf. 5, May 28, 2009

2 FINDINGS: PROJECT CONCEPT, DESIGN AND RELEVANCE

2.1 Project concept and design

According to GEF guidance, “*The terminal evaluation must provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of a completed project by assessing its project design ...*” inter alia.

Central to the elements of project design is the declaration of a buffer zone and a transitional zone around the Badai Tugai strict reserve (Zapovednik) through the adoption of the Biosphere Reserve (BR) model⁷. This is supplemented by capacity building for management and administration of the BR; the promotion of alternative fuel (to avoid cutting trees) and better energy efficiency to reduce the need for fuel; and the demonstration of sustainable land use practices.

The project is designed in response to an analysis of the threats to the Tugai ecosystem in Karakalpakstan, and comprises a multi-faceted approach to address them and their root causes. Three threats were identified and between them they were considered to have 10 root causes together with an overarching root cause of lack of awareness.

The Table below shows the threats and root causes as identified in the ProDoc, as well as the response by project design to address them. The table also provides the views of the Evaluators on the extent to which the project design is deemed to have addressed the threats and root causes.

Table 1. Threats, root causes and Project Outcomes in response (from ProDoc)

THREATS	ROOT CAUSES	OUTCOMES WHICH WILL ADDRESS THREATS / ROOT CAUSES (according to ProDoc)	EVALUATORS' COMMENTS ON PROJECT DESIGN IN RESPONSE TO THE THREATS AND ROOT CAUSES
Threat 1: Water stress, salinization and change in hydrological regimes	1.1 Competition from upstream irrigation for limited water supply. 1.2 Outdated soviet era institutional mandates and water management priorities.	Partly covered under Outcome 1 (activities financed by GOU / WB Drainage Project). Larger aspects addressed outside the scope of the MSP project by government and donor efforts to improve usage and management at national /international scale.	The project does not appear to have addressed the two identified root causes (1.1 and 1.2) of this threat. Upstream competition for river water was rightly assessed as beyond the scope of the project; however, the outdated institutional mandates and priorities identified in the ProDoc could have been addressed by project design. The Evaluators do not agree that this threat and its root causes are addressed by Outcome 1 and the continuation of the upstream abstraction of water (even though beyond the scope of the project) could place other benefits of the project in jeopardy ⁸ .
Threat 2: Direct Tugai Forest habitat destruction and fragmentation	2.1 Persistence of Soviet era management priorities, systems and knowledge base within key regulatory / use institutions. 2.2 Uncertainties during the current transition period regarding status of land and other resources, legal issues, decision making authority, etc. 2.3 Insufficient coverage of the	Outcome 1: A new mixed use protected area (a NP or Biosphere Reserve) established and fully incorporated into the Karakalpakstan protected areas system. The new protected area encompasses a mosaic of Tugai conservation and sustainable use zones, and demonstrates new collaborative approaches to conservation and	Outcome 1 clearly addresses the fragmentation threat, and may, in time, address the forest habitat destruction. Outcome 2 may go some way towards reducing the threat of forest habitat destruction. If Outcome 5 was not so over-optimistic and unrealistic, it could contribute to a reduction in forest habitat destruction.

⁷ Uzbek PA legislation introduced the term “Biosphere Reserve” in 2005 but strictly speaking, this will be the first formal Biosphere Reserve in Karakalpakstan/Uzbekistan (when registered with UNESCO) because although the Chatkal National Park is listed with UNESCO as a BR, UNDP advised that “*it does not function as a fully-fledged BR, as per the requirements adopted later by the Seville Strategy for BR.*”

⁸ UNDP advised that competition from upstream irrigation for limited water supply is now being addressed by large-scale international, national and regional efforts, such as the Aral Sea Basin Programme (WB/UNDP/UNEP/GEF) and are largely beyond the scope of this project.

	protected area system and lack of experience/examples of integrated conservation and sustainable use practices in and around PAs (principles of UNESCO MAB Biosphere Reserves).	natural resource management Outcome 2: An improved legal and regulatory framework and a better understanding of biodiversity values enable institutions, farmers and other stakeholders to manage the protected areas system in a sustainable manner. Outcome 5: Lessons and best practices on biodiversity conservation in Tugai protected area are replicated throughout the protected areas system in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan as a whole.	The Evaluators find that project design does address management priorities, systems and knowledge base, but only partly, and the root causes are not removed. We also find that issues surrounding the status of land, legal issues and decision-making are no less uncertain as a result of the project. However, as already noted, the issue of fragmentation is addressed directly by project design, although the integration of conservation and sustainable use practices, less so.
Threat 3: Unsustainable use of forestry and related biodiversity resources by local populations	3.1 Reduced productivity of agricultural land due to water stress, salinization, poor management and infrastructure decay. 3.2 Undeveloped civil society and outdated, inflexible local governance system prevent effective adaptive responses to transition problems. 3.3 Declining socio-economic situation during transition and loss of Soviet era support systems. 3.4 dependence on fuel wood for cooking and heating energy in many rural communities Low availability and high value of timber construction materials. 3.5 Insufficient coverage of the protected area system and lack of experience/examples of integrated conservation and sustainable use practices in and around PAs (principles of UNESCO MAB Biosphere Reserves).	Outcome 3: New viable co-management approaches and sustainable land use practices within NP/BR buffer zone are demonstrated and documented for further replication. Local communities benefit from the more efficient land use. Outcome 4: Local and regional government institutions and NGOs have the capacity to effectively manage the NP/BR and support sustainable approaches to natural resource utilization.	Outcome 3 is focussed on the management of the Biosphere Reserve and does not contribute directly to countering the root causes of water stress, salinization, etc. Outcome 4 targets the capacity of government institutions and NGOs to enable them to manage the reserve. The Evaluators feel that project design does not address the identified root causes adequately. Neither Outcome 3 (co-management of the BR), nor Outcome 4 (govt and NGO capacity), fully address the threat of unsustainable use of natural resources. The final root cause (3.5) listed against this Threat is not relevant to the threat.
Overarching root cause and barrier – Low awareness of biodiversity values and protected areas objectives. [while this root cause and barrier has been addressed by project implementers, it is not an explicit part of project design]		Outcomes 1 through 5	The Evaluators agree wholeheartedly that low awareness is a fundamental root cause of the many threats faced by the Tugai ecosystem. We also know that many project activities revolve around awareness. However, we also note that awareness is not addressed explicitly by project design in any of the Outcomes.

As can be seen from the Evaluators' comments in the table above, we find that while Threat 1 is not addressed, Threats 2 and 3 are addressed, at least in part, by the project design. However, we do not find the project design as effective as it could be in addressing the root causes. We identified 14 root causes – of these, three are addressed well by project design; five are partly addressed; and, six are not addressed. Unless the root causes are addressed by project design, or there is a clear indication that they are being addressed by other initiatives, the benefits of the project could be short-lived.

As noted elsewhere in this report, the timescale planned for the project may have been too short (hence the need for an extension). The budget appears adequate overall although some significant movements of funds were required between Outcomes and Project Administration and Management (see section 3.2 below). The choice of words for the Outcomes and Objective may have been somewhat over-optimistic (see section 4.1.2).

Project design is considered as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

2.2 Project relevance

Relevance, according to UNDP⁹ is the extent to which the objective and outcomes of a project are consistent with “*beneficiaries’ requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners’ and donors’ policies.*” The Objective and Outcomes of the project address the nexus of poverty and environment in Karakalpakstan; it is in line with the priorities and needs identified in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan; it fits with the global priorities identified in the WWF Global 200 list (Eco-region 134)¹⁰; it fits within the priorities and policies of both the GEF and UNDP. Therefore, the project satisfies the definition of relevance. However, the project design is not a perfect match with the needs as identified in the ProDoc in the form of threats, root causes and barriers, and this is discussed fully in section 2.1 above (particularly Table 1).

Just to reiterate, the ProDoc identified three major threats and ten root causes. Project design does not address all the root causes and for some of those that it does, it does so only partly. Neither does it address the Threat 1 (water stress). Project implementers went further than the project design and addressed the threats and some root causes directly, making the project more relevant.

Project relevance is considered to have been **Satisfactory (S)**.

3 FINDINGS: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

3.1 Project governance

The project is being implemented in the NEX modality applicable by UNDP in Uzbekistan. The Implementing Partner (State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic of Karakalpakstan on behalf of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan) appointed a National Project Coordinator (NPC) who provided strategic oversight on behalf of the Government.

3.1.1 Project steering

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) is the highest level of governance for the Project but in 2009, UNDP introduced a new governance structure for projects. Under the new structure, the new Project Board (PB) is the decision-making body and the PSC becomes responsible more for technical advice and making recommendations. Coming as it did towards the end of this project’s operational phase, it did not apply fully to this project.

The PSC is charged with advising on:

- The annual work plans of the project on the basis of the LogFrame matrix
- Matters concerning project consultants, organization and management
- Cooperation between the different parties involved in project implementation

It is chaired by the NPC (who is also chairman of Goskompriroda) and has met nine times since the beginning of the project. The PSC is comprised of 26 members, including representatives of the Parliament and the Government of Karakalpakstan, state organizations of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan, NGOs, local authorities, and Village Citizens Councils. Notable among these members is the high number of members from the local government and community levels. Regulations of the PSC were approved by the Karakalpak Parliament in 2006. The Project Manager and project team members attend as required.

⁹ UNDP (2011) *UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF-Financed Projects – version for external evaluators*. Final Draft. http://api.ning.com/files/q21NtCDxX3Ww5lCf9bKJcn3KgJrTJp4MgyIk51qCvSI*Q-DmpdUeHXtsQl1mqkFHHwJ-6nfRRxpWWCci8U3SzsJLfz40vIh/UNDPevaluationguidancedraft_forEvaluationTeam_versionMarch172011.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/g200/g134.html>

The Evaluators reviewed minutes of all eight meetings and noted that attendance at meetings was between 58% and 89% of members. Three members did not attend any meetings and sent a replacement; one member attended only one meeting; at one meeting there more replacements than members. However, it is good to note that representatives from many VCC were among the most active members of the PSC.

It is expected that in time, the PSC will evolve into a Management Board or some such similar structure for the Amu Darya Biosphere Reserve.

Rating for project governance is **Satisfactory (S)**.

3.1.2 Project management and implementation

Day-to-day implementation of the project was the responsibility of a PMU located in offices adjoining Goskompiroda Karakalpakstan in Nukus. The team comprised a full-time Project Manager, five professional staff including a National Technical Coordinator, an Administration and Financial Assistant, a Public Relations Officer and two Project Assistants, and six service support staff (two drivers, three security guards, and a cleaner).

The PM resigned in March 2011 to take up a position of PM in another UNDP project; he was replaced by a Task Manager in May 2011. There was no obvious reduction in efficiency or any obvious difficulties as a result of the change although there is an acknowledged lack of deep knowledge of the project on the part of the Task Manager.

The position of AFA changed twice (3 appointees), however, there was no discernible loss of competence. For the first year of the Project, the PM was assisted by an international Chief Technical Advisor and in July 2007 the NTC was hired on a full-time basis and has been with the Project ever since. The project also benefited from a "roving" international advisor who also led the studies into the boundaries and zoning of the proposed Biosphere Reserve as well as making other inputs, e.g. into the energy efficiency sub-component.

Implementation of the Project appears to have been effective, with a particularly well-organised and highly motivated project team overseen by strong leadership. One key stakeholder believed that *"the Project has been successful, owing to a well-organized and properly composed Project group led by a competent Project Manager"*. The Evaluators see the PMU as a good professional team, cohesive, helpful, supportive, with team members clear about their roles.

Project management and implementation has been focussed closely on the entire scope of the LogFrame but with special focus on Outcome 1 which sought the designation of a new Biosphere Reserve along the lower reaches of the Amu Darya River.

Throughout its life, the project engaged a large number of consultants/contractors – around 128 contracts in all¹¹. The greater majority of these were local residents from Karakalpakstan; and with minor exceptions, all were men. At least 20 or so were taken on repeated contracts, some on the same task others on different tasks, but at least 100 or so different individuals were contracted by the project. The fact that these consultants were locals can be seen as a mechanism for true involvement with project implementation by local people.

Project management and administration was **Satisfactory (S)**.

¹¹ UNDP advised that *"The project has been designated by UNDP within its portfolio, as a complex project (only 2 out of 14, currently), dealing with a range of issues of highly specialized content, therefore this required mobilization of specialized local experts, 20 annually, on average. This provided tailored approach to each individual assignment, under close oversight of the National Technical Coordinator"*.

3.1.3 The role of Government

The Karakalpak Government has shown true ownership of the project and this is mirrored in the District Khokimiyat that the Evaluators encountered. Its representative, the State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic of Karakalpakstan (Goskompriroda), signed the ProDoc and then served as the Executing Agency and its Chairman served as the NPC for the project and chaired the PSC as well as the Project Board. This is a significant investment in the project and illustrates the government commitment which augurs well for the sustainability of the project benefits, at least in principle.

As part of its co-financing (in-kind) obligations, Goskompriroda provided the project with premises located in its building in Nukus. The premises, which were renovated through project funds, were equipped with telephone line, electricity connection, heating system and wastewater connection. Other aspects of the co-financing in kind provided by the government included the dedication of numerous hours of staff time from the NPC down.

The project was executed in accordance with the NEX modality applicable by UNDP in Uzbekistan. This required close collaboration between the NPC on behalf of the Government and UNDP personnel, and as far as could be ascertained, the relationship has been cooperative and effective throughout.

The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan issued a decree through Resolution # 243 on 26 August 2011 "*On the organization of the Lower Amu Darya State Biosphere Reserve of the Main Forestry Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan*". The Biosphere Reserve, with a total area of 68,717.8 hectares, represents the culmination of endless lobbying, awareness raising, and basic hard work by project personnel, and is a good illustration of the Government's commitment to the project.

3.1.4 The role of UNDP

As implementing agency, UNDP is responsible to the GEF for the timely and cost-effective delivery of the agreed project outputs. It achieves this through its understandings with the Governments of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan and its agreement with SCNP as executing agency. UNDP has an obligation to provide technical backstopping services and monitor adherence to the work plan so as to ensure accountability, and its efforts in this respect are spearheaded by the Country Office in Tashkent which has legal responsibility for the GEF funds.

The basis for UNDP's agreements with the GEF, the Government and the Executing Agency is the signed Project Document. The UNDP Resident Representative in Uzbekistan may only approve changes to the ProDoc following consultation and agreement with the UNDP/GEF Regional Office and the Government signatories to the project document. Following such consultation and agreement, revisions or additions can be made to any of the annexes of the ProDoc, revisions which do not involve significant changes in the Objective and Outcomes of the project, and mandatory annual revisions which re-phase the delivery of agreed project inputs or increased expert or other costs due to inflation or to take into account agency expenditure flexibility. The Tugai project was not subjected to too many changes apart from those carried out during the Inception Workshop.

The UNDP Resident Representative in Uzbekistan coordinates inputs into the annual Project Implementation Review (PIR) for submission to UNDP/GEF, ensures that project objectives are advanced through the policy dialogue with the Government, and undertakes official transmission of reports to the GEF national focal point.

UNDP also provides guidance and oversight of the project through its monitoring of implementation; field visits to project areas; the preparation and circulation of reports; helping to resolve problems; reviewing and revising project reports and providing feedback; and providing technical support. It

also has a role in financial management and reporting by ensuring annual audits are carried out, approving budget revisions, and coordinating final financial closure. UNDP approved major revisions to the project budget moving almost a third of the budget from two outcomes to project administration and management.

UNDP also oversees the evaluation of results by approving ToRs for independent Mid-Term and Terminal evaluations, monitoring their conduct and approving the management response. It also accounts for the project annually to the GEF through the PIR which is the result of collaboration between the PMU, the UNDP-CO and the UNDP-GEF RTA and has the potential to be a very useful mechanism. In the past, the PIR was cumbersome and rigid but its scope and structure have both been improved recently. The PIRs produced by the Tugai project are of good quality.

The work of the UNDP Country Office is supported by the UNDP/GEF Regional Coordination Office in Bratislava, specifically the Regional Technical Advisor (RTA), who also provides coordination within the whole UNDP/GEF portfolio of projects for the region. More specifically, the UNDP/GEF RTA provides technical support to the UNDP Country Office and the GEF National Operational Focal Point, approves the project inception report and terminal reports, reviews budget revisions prior to signature, follows up closely on implementation progress, assures the eligibility of project interventions in light of GEF policy guidance and approved project design, represents UNDP/GEF on the PSC, and approves PIRs, including performance ratings, for submission to GEF. The RTA was an active participant at the project Inception Workshop and visited project sites in Karakalpakstan during the life of the project.

3.2 Financial management

3.2.1 Budget and financial planning

According to the ProDoc, the project had an initial total cash budget of US\$1,188,000, of which the GEF provided US\$970,000 (excluding US\$25,000 for the PDF stages).

A Terminal Evaluation is not a financial audit and this assessment is focussed on the relative allocation of financial resources between Outcomes and changes that have occurred during the life of the project.

Project budgets invariably change during implementation and sometimes the changes are not clearly recorded. While implementers are fully aware of these changes, it is difficult for outsiders such as evaluators to keep track of the changes. The Evaluators therefore invited the PMU to provide the relative allocations to each Outcome and the Project Admin as originally in the ProDoc and according to the latest expenditure figures. The request was not fully understood right away and the numerous iterations led to erroneous figures being provided by the PMU and the evaluators are grateful to UNDP for pointing this out. As a result, the evaluators have gone back to the ProDoc and the following table and discussion are based on the findings.

The table shows the comparative amounts allocated from the GEF and cash co-fin budgets for each of the Outcomes and Project Admin/Management. The first column comprises figures from the MSP request, as submitted to GEF and as approved by GEF, which is annexed to the ProDoc; the second column shows relative allocations as indicated in the Project Results and Resources Framework (Section II of the ProDoc); the third column shows the same allocations according to the Total Project Workplan and Budget (Section III of the ProDoc). The final column shows the amounts of expenditure to date for each Outcome and the Project Admin/Management. As these figures were presumed accurate some five weeks before project closure (as on 20 November 2011) they are considered to be close enough to final expenditure levels. Percentage amounts refer to the proportion of each allocation as a fraction of the total budget in the column.

Table 2. GEF and cash Co-Financing budget allocations per Outcome, differences in the ProDoc and final expenditures

OUTCOME	BUDGET OF MSP BY ACTIVITY (as annexed to ProDoc)		BUDGET AS IN PRODOC				EXPENDITURE TO DATE ¹² AS PROVIDED BY PMU		EVALUATORS' COMMENTS ON CHANGES
			SECTION II: PROJECT RESULTS AND RESOURCES FRAMEWORK		SECTION III: TOTAL BUDGET AND WORKPLAN				
Outcome 1 <i>A new mixed use protected area (a NP or Biosphere Reserve) established and fully incorporated into the Karakalpakstan protected areas system</i>	GEF Co-fin Total %	319,000 0 319,000 27%	GEF Co-fin Total %	279,000 0 279,000 23%	GEF Co-fin Total %	244,000 0 244,000 21%	GEF Co-fin Total %	261,261 25,321 286,582 25%	Relative allocation dropped from 27% to 21% but relative expenditure climbed back to 25%. Significant increase in the co-fin actual expenditure. Possibly overspent.
Outcome 2 <i>An improved legal and regulatory framework and a better understanding of biodiversity values enable institutions, farmers and other stakeholders to manage the protected areas system in a sustainable manner</i>	GEF Co-fin Total %	164,000 0 164,000 14%	GEF Co-fin Total %	159,000 0 159,000 13%	GEF Co-fin Total %	124,000 0 124,000 10%	GEF Co-fin Total %	159,484 37 159,521 13%	Decrease in relative allocation from 14% to 10% but actual expenditure close to original allocation. Increase in co-fin of no consequence. Possibly overspent.
Outcome 3 <i>New viable co-management approaches and sustainable land use practices within NP/BR buffer zone are demonstrated and documented for further replication</i>	GEF Co-fin Total %	227,000 198,000 425,000 36%	GEF Co-fin Total %	268,000 132,000 400,000 34%	GEF Co-fin Total %	268,000 132,000 400,000 34%	GEF Co-fin Total %	152,878 24,602 177,480 15%	Significant reduction in both GEF and co-fin. Relative allocation reduced from 36% to 15%. Severely underspent, in both GEF and co-fin.
Outcome 4 <i>Local and regional government institutions and NGOs have the capacity to effectively manage the NP/BR and support sustainable approaches to natural resource utilization</i>	GEF Co-fin Total %	180,000 0 180,000 16%	GEF Co-fin Total %	128,000 0 128,000 11%	GEF Co-fin Total %	128,000 0 128,000 11%	GEF Co-fin Total %	103,439 588 104,027 10%	Co-fin increase insignificant. Relative allocation constant after decrease from 16% to 11%.
Outcome 5 <i>Lessons and best practices on biodiversity conservation in Tugai protected area are replicated throughout the protected areas system in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan as a whole</i>	GEF Co-fin Total %	80,000 0 80,000 7%	GEF Co-fin Total %	80,000 0 80,000 7%	GEF Co-fin Total %	75,000 0 75,000 6%	GEF Co-fin Total %	63,703 640 64,343 6%	Co-fin increase insignificant and relative allocation remained unchanged at 7-6%.
Project Administration and Management Costs and expenses allocated to managing the project and which are instrumental in the achievement of more than one Outcome	GEF Co-fin Total %	no budget indicated	GEF Co-fin Total %	56,000 86,000 142,000 12%	GEF Co-fin Total %	131,000 86,000 217,000 18%	GEF Co-fin Total %	159,577 198,817 358,394 31%	Increased from no allocation in MSP GEF allocation or co-fin up to 31%, the highest expenditure. The increase came mainly from Outcome 3. Overspent
TOTALS	GEF Co-fin Total %	970,000 198,000 1,168,000 100%	GEF Co-fin Total %	970,000 218,000 1,188,000 100%	GEF Co-fin Total %	970,000 218,000 1,188,000 100%	GEF Co-fin Total %	900,342 250,005 1,150,347 100%	Whereas the GEF budget is underspent by 69,658, the co-fin (UNDP TRAC) is overspent by 32,005. Overall, 37,653 remain as unspent but committed

The first issue which is evident from the table is that the budget in the MSP Proposal, as approved by GEF, does not provide for Project Admin/Management, either from the GEF or the co-fin budgets.

The second issue is that in two tables in the ProDoc, which follow each other contiguously, the budget allocations to Outcomes and the Project Admin/Management, are not the same for four out of the six allocations – there is a reduction (between the RRF table and the Workplan and Budget

¹² As on 20 November 2011, with five weeks to project closure.

table) for Outcomes 1, 2 and 5, and an increase in Project Admin/Management. No explanation is given in the ProDoc for this difference.

The apparent oversight which left Project Admin/Management unfunded is remedied in the ProDoc through a reallocation of relative amounts, reducing the budgets for some Outcomes and creating a budget for Project Admin/Management which goes from no allocation to one of 12% and then to 18%. In terms of relative allocations, Outcome 3 remains the highest funded (although down from 36% to 34%); Outcome 1 remains the second highest funded at around 23%; Outcome 5 is the lowest funded (at around 7%).

The third issue is the level of allocation to Project Admin/Management from the GEF budget – 18% of the total GEF budget. This proportion is maintained in the final expenditure column where the figure is 17.7% of the GEF expenditure. This is in excess of the desired 10% limit according to GEF rules. In fact, the total amount (GEF plus co-fin) expended on Project Admin/Management is 31% of the total expenditure. The evaluators see this as excessive.

According to UNDP, *“a thorough analysis showed that this figure includes expenses which are not associated with Project Administration and Management. The total amount of these “irrelevant” expenses is USD 69,968 (USD 64,899 – GEF funds; USD 5,069 - TRAC funds). This amount includes expenses for thematic areas, such as partial cost of vehicle procured for field works and vehicle transportation cost, contracts with international and national consultants, salary of National Technical Coordinator, equipment and furniture for visit center and information center, travel and others. So, the actual management expenses amount was USD 288,426”*. This analysis also led UNDP to claim that actual GEF expenses are US\$94,678, and this amounts to 9.8% of the GEF budget.

The PMU explained that Project Administration and Management expenditures increased due to an increase in staff salaries (according to UNDP, salaries doubled since project formulation in 2003), as a result of Uzbekistan graduating to a middle income country; official travel between Nukus and Tashkent contributed to some of this increase although the project did its best to economize in all official trips by paying *ad hoc* DSA and terminal expenses; that other administration costs such as regular phone calls to Tashkent, regular sending of original documents through delivery system to CO, etc, increased expenditures; and that the project was extended by 16 months.

The Evaluators accept that increases in staff salaries were unforeseen, but all other expenses quoted by the PMU should have been fully predictable (this was not the first project that UNDP has had which was based in Nukus) and, at least, indicate bad project design. It is also important to note that the salary of NTC is correctly tagged to Project Admin/Management and that salary increases, according to UNDP documents, happened in 2011.

The “no cost” extension by 16 months (26% of the original five years) did have a cost – it was done at a cost to Outcomes 3 and 4.

Outcome 3 has dropped from 36% in the GEF approved MSP Proposal to 15% in actual expenditure – a drop of US\$247,520, the budget was slashed in half (58%). According to the PMU this was the result of difficulties encountered in implementing sustainable land use practices. The project had selected three districts for pilots and in two of them (Beruniy and Nukus districts) project pilot sites on sustainable land use were discontinued, resulting in savings.

Regarding Outcome 4, the reduction was less than in Outcome 3 (almost US\$76,000), but still significant (42%). The PMU advised the Evaluators that the project economized on funds as recommended by the MTE. The MTE also recommended that the time for preparation of training manuals be increased and as a result, the time available for seminars was decreased. The Project also economized on spending by paying *ad hoc* DSA and terminal expenses for consultants coming from other regions and some travelling expenses of specialists from the State Committee for Nature Protection (SCNP) coming from other districts whose expenses were partly covered by SCNP itself.

According to the PMU all budget revisions with fund reallocations were agreed with the Bratislava Regional Office and approved by the UNDP CO. The Evaluators accept these explanations as plausible, and that the changes were approved by UNDP. However, the magnitude of the reductions is still seen as so substantial (almost one third of the entire project budget) that it should have led, at least, to a revision of the LogFrame – we are not aware of any such change.

The total funds spent by the project and remaining funds amount to US\$1,227,456 and this is close to forecast. Of this, the total GEF funds spent and remaining are US\$966,516 and this too is very close to the forecast in the ProDoc which was US\$970,000 (after taking into account the support for the PDF 'A' phase).

While the project has stayed within budget in spite of an extension of more than one year, the drastic revisions and reallocation of funds between Outcomes and Project Admin/Management, leading to the latter being almost a third of the total project budget, rates project financial management as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

3.2.2 Co-financing

The total amount of co-financing pledged according to the ProDoc was US\$1,073,718 and all pledges eventuated as pledged, with the UNDP actual contribution being slightly higher than originally pledged. As a result, the amount of co-fin received or still expected is US\$1,099,556. This is close to the 1:1 ratio expected at the time. Of the total amount of co-fin, some 75% was in-kind or through parallel projects and the cash co-fin totalled US\$266,541. The following table provides a summary of the co-fin pledged, the amount actually received and the amount still outstanding.

Table 3. Co-financing pledged and acquired

PARTNER OR CONTRIBUTOR	NATURE OF CONTRIBUTOR	NATURE OF CONTRIBUTION	AMOUNT (in US Dollars)	
			PLEGDED (according to ProDoc)	ACTUAL RECEIVED OR REMAINING
WWF	NGO	Grant	15,000	15,000
British Embassy	Bilateral	Grant	7,178	7,178
Government	Government	In kind	180,000	180,000
UNDP Country Office	GEF Implementing Agency	Grant	218,000	244,378
IBRD	Multilateral	Parallel	500,000	500,000
EU	Multilateral	Parallel	150,000	150,000
NATO	Multilateral	In kind (PDF 'A')	3,000	3,000
TOTALS			1,073,178	1,099,556

The cash co-fin remaining is US\$16,536 some of which was provided by an NGO and a Bilateral source. Although this is of some concern, the PMU advises that it will be spent (during the next five weeks) for purchasing equipment for the Biosphere Reserve and we find that co-fin has been managed well – **Satisfactory (S)**.

3.3 Partnership strategy and stakeholder participation

3.3.1 Partners and partnership strategy

Partners are defined by the OECD¹³ as “*The individuals and/or organizations that collaborate to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives*”, and, “*the concept of partnership connotes shared goals, common responsibility for outcomes, distinct accountabilities and reciprocal obligations*”.

Although neither the ProDoc nor the Inception Report indicated a partnership strategy for the project, the ProDoc identified stakeholders thoroughly and considered their potential interest in the project. These stakeholders did collaborate with the project on mutually agreed objectives and shared goals¹⁴.

3.3.2 Participation at the project formulation phase

According to the ProDoc, the PDF ‘A’ activities were executed and coordinated by the Karakalpakstan SCNP. In Karakalpakstan the SCNP, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, particularly the Department of Forestry, and the UNDP Environment Programme were consulted throughout the project design process.

A wide stakeholder consultation exercise was undertaken in Karakalpakstan aimed at gathering and discussing ideas and proposals for inclusion in the project. The process started during the baseline assessments and continued throughout the PDF ‘A’ with individual interviews, the logframe workshop, and a number of roundtables. As broad a range as possible of regional and local stakeholders were involved in the process – at the national level this included the Council of Ministers of Karakalpakstan, the Institute of Bioecology of Karakalpak Academy of Sciences, the Karakalpakstan MAWR (Departments for Forestry, Water Management, and Agriculture), and Nukus based NGOs. At the local level, Khokimiyats, local forest enterprises and protected area managers were all consulted and involved in the LogFrame workshop.

Stakeholders were then also actively involved in the final stages of the project brief preparation through dissemination of drafts and information papers (in Russian) with revisions being carried out on the basis of comments received. The ProDoc provided a list of Stakeholders as an annex.

The inception workshop revealed that there was a real need for discussion among stakeholders in the Tugai project area – this did take place and involved particularly the Forest Department, Khokimiyats, local population, scientists and NGOs. Especially notable was the cooperation (and decrease in competition) between SCNP (Goskompriroda), the Forestry Department and the Hunting Department. Such cooperation and dialogue paved the way to an improvement in interagency cooperation, and to the development of joint mechanisms for controlling unsustainable use of ecological resources.

Participation during project formulation has been **Satisfactory (S)**.

¹³ DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (2002) *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*. OECD, Paris. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf> as referred to in – UNDP (2011) *UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF-Financed Projects – version for external evaluators*. Final Draft.

¹⁴ In its comments on the draft report, UNDP referred to “*relevant section on partnerships in the PIRs*”. The Evaluators could locate this section only in the PIR2010 and PIR 2011, and even then, it was not very helpful.

3.3.3 Participation during the implementation phase

Project design provided for the full involvement of stakeholders in the final site and boundaries identification, the determination of zonation and regime definitions, the management planning process and mechanisms for ensuring stakeholder representation and role in the implementation of the management plan. According to one stakeholder, it was carried out “*in close cooperation with governmental bodies (Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, State Committee for Nature Protection, Department of Natural Reserves, National Parks and Hunting Farms), local executive authorities (District Khokimiats), public organizations (self-government of rural communities villagers), and non-governmental and scientific institutions*”.

Throughout the project, the PMU worked to develop consensus through a range of instruments/mechanisms including seminars, meetings, joint activities, etc. The project considered local participation as a priority and worked hard to raise awareness and win over an initially sceptical public. The project was helped in this by the benefits that started to materialize from its work and the inclusive events that it organized (see Annex 6).

The Evaluators are aware of a significant level of involvement by stakeholders, especially at the administrative districts level, in the activities of the project. Therefore, in an attempt to relate this to specific project activities (as would have been covered by a partnership strategy had there been one), the Evaluators sought this information from the PMU. Table 4 below shows the PMU response together with the Evaluators’ comments.

Table 4. Stakeholder involvement in project implementation

STAKEHOLDERS IDENTIFIED IN THE PROJECT DOCUMENT TOGETHER WITH THEIR AREAS OF INTEREST	EXTENT OF INVOLVEMENT ACCORDING TO PMU	EVALUATORS’ COMMENTS
The State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic Karakalpakstan (Goscompriroda RK) – tugai conservation works	National executing agency. Formally submitted all documents on Biosphere reserve (BR) establishment to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. As result BR established and tugai forests became protected. It also implements protection of tugai forests through its inspectors-staff.	The SCNP and Forestry Departments work very well together during the establishment of the BR.
Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of RK – forestry works in the project area	Manages forests in project areas through six forestry departments (Beruni, Kipchak, Khodjeli, Bozatau, Karauzyak and Nukus district departments)	
The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of RK – job creation, credits for family businesses in rural areas (500-600 thousand soum)	Current ministry implements this activity, but project did not cooperate with the ministry.	Involvement of the Ministry in project activities was minor
The Ministry of Economy of RK – data management system creation	Current ministry carried out an assessment of prepared documents related on Biosphere Reserve which were submitted to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	While not in creation of data management system, Ministry involved in reviewing Cabinet resolution to establish BR.
Khokimiyats in the project area – all types of assistance and support (organizational, logistics, informational, etc.)	They assessed project documents on BR and made decisions on BR lands. They also supported in realization of project components in their district territories.	Representatives of eight Khokimiyats participated in project activities, but the eventual BR covered territory in only two districts. Difficult to assess the future of tugay resources which are outside the BR border.
The regional office of the International Joint Development Association – micro-funding, training in computers, medico-sanitary training of public health staff, humanitarian assistance (supply of food and clothes), installation of hand pumps, rehabilitation of “ECOS” systems	Project did not cooperate with mentioned organizations. Project jointly with microcredit organization, organized issuance of 35 credits to the population living in the project area.	No comment
The Republican Chamber of Businessmen and Producers is running a joint project with the Asian Bank for Development – “Innovations in the Poverty Elimination in the Republic Karakalpakstan”, the Component “Job Creation through Small Business	Project did no cooperate with it.	Had the project cooperated with this activity, it could have led to its support of income generation activities in project territory

Development"		
Micro-financial training centre. UNDP micro-credit project	Project did no cooperate with it	UNDP noted that 67 persons were trained and 30 micro-credits were issued.
The "Consulting-Training" Company is working in a F. Ebert's project; it has 20 skilled trainers in all RK regions to deliver training to local communities	Project did no cooperate with it	While these organizations would have made important partners, they ceased to exist just before or during project implementation.
Counterpart Consortium – Uzbekistan. The Centre of Civic Development. Has a group of skilled trainers for training delivery in the country and training curricula for local communities	Project did no cooperate with it	
NGO "Daulet" is working in the framework of a Soros Foundation's project (training in micro-credit management) and participates as a partner in UNDP regional projects	Project did no cooperate with it	
NGO "Eco-Priaralie" – high-quality consultations and expertise in the following areas: water use, economics, sociological studies, monitoring, data management system creation	Project did no cooperate with it	
The Republican Association of Hunters and Fishers – creation of a pheasant farm (10-15 new jobs), designation and development of game areas in Biruni and Bozatau districts (new jobs)	Project organized training for specialists on protection and sustainable use of biodiversity. Representatives of Association of Hunters and Fishers took part in the training	Cooperation by the project may have results in new income generation activities.
CHOSON Joint Venture (with Korea) – liquorice root farming (new jobs) and eco-tourism (new jobs)	Project did no cooperate with it	

Stakeholder involvement during project implementation is considered as **Satisfactory (S)**.

3.4 Monitoring and evaluation

3.4.1 M&E design, planning and implementation

*"GEF projects are required to develop M&E plans by the time of work program inclusion, to appropriately budget M&E plans, and to fully carry out the M&E plan during implementation. Project managers are also expected to use the information generated by the M&E system during project implementation to improve and adapt the project to changing situations."*¹⁵

The M&E Plan required by GEF should comprise a number of minimum requirements¹⁶ as in the following table which discusses the adequacy of the provisions for M&E made by project design and implemented by the PMU.

Table 5. GEF minimum requirements for M&E planning

GEF M&E REQUIREMENTS	EVALUATORS' COMMENTS
SMART ¹⁷ indicators for project implementation, or, if no indicators are identified, an alternative plan for monitoring that will deliver reliable and valid information to management	Indicators are provided for all Outcomes in the LogFrame. Only a few satisfy the SMART criteria completely. According to the Inception Report, the revised Indicators were to focus on "results and performance of the project and hence be more robust and verifiable, to reflect the realities on the ground" thus making no distinction between implementation and results.
SMART indicators for results (outcomes and, if applicable, impacts), and, where appropriate, corporate-level indicators	As noted above, the Indicators selected did not distinguish between implementation and results; neither were there any corporate-level indicators.
A project baseline or, if major baseline indicators are not identified, an alternative plan for addressing this within one year of implementation	Baselines are identified in the LogFrame showing the situation at the beginning of the project. These are related to the targets which the project is expected to aim for. Both baselines and targets are mostly numerically quantified.

¹⁵ GEF Evaluation Office, *Annual Performance Report 2008*. GEF Council Paper GEF/ME/C.35/Inf. 5, May 28, 2009

¹⁶ See - <http://gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/MEPTools/meptstandards.html> and the *GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*, Evaluation Document, 2006, No.1

¹⁷ SMART = **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**imely - according to *Guidelines for Implementing and Executing Agencies to Conduct Terminal Evaluations*. GEF, 2007

An M&E Plan with identification of reviews and evaluations which will be undertaken, such as mid-term reviews or evaluations of activities	The project had a basic M&E plan (also in the Inception Report) which identified reviews and evaluations which were planned, including an MTE and this TE.
An organizational setup and budgets for monitoring and evaluation	The Inception Report tabulates the budget that was to be set aside for M&E. The amount indicated, US\$107,000, does not include the cost of project team staff time and UNDP staff and travel expenses.

As can be seen from the above assessment, the project meets most if not all the requirements of the GEF for M&E. In an attempt to obtain a more definitive indication of the project's compliance with the GEF M&E expectations, the Evaluators applied the instrument of assessment used by the GEF itself (see table below). This instrument states that – *a project needs to be in compliance with all the critical parameters and needs to perform sufficiently well on all the parameters together. To be classified as compliant, projects are required to score at least a 2 (on a scale of 1 to 3, with 3 being the highest) on each of the critical parameters and to have an aggregate score of 26 out of a maximum of 39.*¹⁸

Table 6. Instrument for assessment of M&E Plans

PARAMETERS	RAW RESPONSE AND POSSIBLE SCORE	PROJECT SCORE
1 Is there at least one specific indicator in the log frame for each of the project objectives and outcomes?	Yes.....3 No.....1	3
2 Are the indicators in the log frame relevant to the chosen objectives and outcomes?	Yes.....3 Yes, but only some are relevant.....2 No.....1	2
3 Are the indicators in the log frame sufficient to assess achievement of the objectives and outcomes?	Sufficient.....3 Largely Sufficient.....2 Some important indicators are missing.....1	2
4 Are the indicators for project objectives and Outcomes quantifiable?	Yes.....3 Some of them are.....2 No, or else it has not been shown how the indicators could be quantified.....1	2
5 Has the complete and relevant baseline information been provided?	Yes, complete baseline info provided.....3 Partial info but baseline survey in 1st year.....2.5 No info but baseline survey in 1st year.....2 Only partial baseline information.....1.5 No info provided.....1	3
6 Has the methodology for determining the Baseline been explained?	Yes.....3 No.....1	2
7 Has a separate budget been allocated to M&E activities?	Yes.....3 No.....1	3
8 Have the responsibilities been clearly specified for the M&E activities?	Yes, and clearly specified.....3 Yes, broadly specified.....2 No.....1	1
9 Have the time frames been specified for the M&E activities?	Yes, for all the activities.....3 Yes, but only for major activities.....2 No.....1	2
10 Have the performance standards (targets) been specified in the log frame for the project outputs?	Yes, for all the outputs.....3 Yes, but only for major outputs.....2 No.....1	3
11 Have the targets been specified for the indicators for project objectives and outcomes in the log frame?	Yes, for most.....3 Yes, but only for some indicators.....2 No.....1	3
12 Are the specified targets for indicators of project objective and outcomes based on initial conditions?	Yes, for most.....3 Yes, but only for some of the indicators.....2 No.....1	2
13 Do the project documents mention having made a Provision for mid term and terminal evaluation?	Yes, both mid term and terminal evaluation...3 Only terminal evaluation.....2.5 Only mid term evaluation.....1.5 No information provided.....1	3

¹⁸ GEF Evaluation Office, *Annual Performance Report 2008*. GEF Council Paper GEF/ME/C.35/Inf. 5, May 28, 2009

TOTAL	31
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On the basis of the above tally, the project is fully compliant with the M&E requirements of the GEF and the rating for M&E planning and budgeting is **Satisfactory (S)**.

3.4.2 Project monitoring, the LogFrame Matrix and adaptive management

Project monitoring usually refers to performance monitoring, which is a regular assessment of progress towards the project Objective and Outcomes often using Indicators. The results of performance monitoring are used to guide project implementation and revise and refine implementation plans through adaptive management. Adaptive management is a formal, systematic, and rigorous approach to learning from the results of management actions, accommodating change and improving management. It involves an analysis of the situation (the result of monitoring), exploring alternative actions and making explicit adjustments to the implementation strategy and the LogFrame.

The LogFrame is recognized as the paramount tool against which project performance and progress towards targets are measured. It is also an excellent tool for adaptive management. The LogFrame is not intended to be a static summary of the project strategy, and its continuing revision, updating and refinement are a manifestation of adaptive management.

The LogFrame for this project was revised at the Inception Workshop. However, this was not adaptive management but reflected more the passage of time since the original project concept and the need to strengthen aspects of project design. According to information received by the Evaluators, there were no further changes to the LogFrame. In fact we have detected no signs of adaptive management. The significant change in project prescription – the reduction in area of the proposed Biosphere Reserve, could have been a candidate for adaptive management. However, the final decision was only made four months before project closure and, as UNDP observed, changes to the project LogFrame at this late stage were not practical.

One further effective instrument for project management is the Project Implementation Review (PIR) which is carried out annually and provided to the GEF by UNDP as part of its accountability process. The Evaluators have received copies of all PIRs. It is interesting to note that in PIR-2007, the RTA makes recommendations for the project to address the issue of financial sustainability as well as an exit strategy for the project. PIR-2008 has the METT attached, however, in PIR-2011 the GEF Tracking Tool is left blank. Finally, the project is rated as Satisfactory (S) in PIR-2007, PIR-2009 and PIR-2011 and Highly Satisfactory in PIR-2008 and PIR-2010. This consistent high rating was confirmed by the MTE – see below.

Project monitoring and adaptive management are considered as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

3.4.3 The Mid-Term Evaluation

A Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE)¹⁹ was carried out in July/August 2008 and its overall finding was that the project was **Highly Satisfactory (HS)**. And, whereas implementation was also found to be **Highly Satisfactory (HS)** as was stakeholder participation, monitoring and evaluation were rated as **Satisfactory (S)** and the sustainability of the Project was deemed to be **Marginally Satisfactory (MS)**.

¹⁹ It should be noted that an MTE and a TE are two separate and independent evaluations and the timescale, parameters and perspectives being evaluated are not the same. There is always the possibility that an MTE and a TE of the same project reach different conclusions.

The MTE went on to make 12 recommendations – two on the duration of the project; two on watering/irrigation; three on project administration (financial management, data backups, power supply); one on Indicators in the LogFrame; and four at the Outputs level (the visitor centre, training, GIS, and eco-tourism). As evidenced by the management response, the PMU/UNDP accepted all recommendations in principle and the following table indicates the action that was proposed to be taken in response. The table also shows the action actually taken as reported by the PMU, and comments from the Evaluators.

Table 7. Realization of MTE recommendations

MTE RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED MEASURES FROM MTE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE (WITH TIMESCALE)	ACTUAL ACTION TAKEN	EVALUATORS' COMMENTS
1 Given the unaccountable delay in its start-up, that the Project be compensated for the time lost and its end date moved back four months to the end of December 2010.	Accepted		In the event, the project was extended to December 2011 (see PIR-2010)
2 The Project strategy be changed to accommodate the need to address the issue of regeneration of the tugai forest to ensure the long-term ecological sustainability of the forest and the Project's benefits.	Accepted. Lack of water resources in Karakalpakstan is a major issue. The project is planning recruitment of a specialist on sustainable water resources. The specialist will be responsible for analysis of use of water resources on the project territory and preparation of proposals on possibility of water watering of degraded sites of tugai forests with surface and ground water. The specialist is also responsible for analysis of presence of lens of ground water in accordance to the data of State Entrepreneurship «Aral Sea Basin Hydro-geological Expedition». (Recruitment of a Specialist by the end of November 2008 for 10 months)	Consultant conducted an analysis on possible sources of tugai flooding. Three main sources distinguished: ground water, surface water and pumping surface water. Project selected the most realistic source – pumping surface water. Separately, for Nurumtubek site proposed surface water flooding of tugai.	The MTE recommendation focused on the “ <i>long-term ecological sustainability of the forest</i> ” and the response focused on demonstrating alternative ways of watering the Tugai ecosystem and the plantings carried out through the project. (see also 4 below)
3 In addition to the compensation time added, in order to build upon currently sound achievements and to increase the sustainability of its outcomes that the Project is granted a one year, no-cost extension and the end date is set at 31 st December 2011.	Accepted. No cost extension.		See above under 1
4 UNDP should release Project funds as necessary to purchase and operate an SNP 500/10 pump in order to make experiments into stimulating the regeneration of tugai forest.	Pending Expert Assessment. Realization of recommendation is directly linked with realization of item №2. After analysis and definition of existing water resources the project will define procurement of necessary equipment. (2009)	SNP 500/10 water pumps are very large and project procured other mobile pumps, which can be transferred to needed area. Project procured 12 diesel and 1 electric water pumps. 10 water pumps procured to forestry department and 2 for community forestry councils. Pumps irrigate non-flooded tugai areas.	The recommendation was one pump for experiment. The project purchased 13 pumps. The Evaluators doubt that actual watering of Tugai ecosystem can be extensive enough to make a serious difference, or that it can be sustained
5 The Project needs to clarify its disbursements made over as long a period as possible to better reflect the real costs of each outcome and to provide for better future management decisions.	Accepted. The Budget revision is prepared in October 2008. Fund in Outcomes 5 and 6 is reallocated in other Outcomes. Next year the project will start realization of MTE recommendations. Unfortunately, fund for 2006-2007 is impossible to reallocate. (By the end of the year and following years)	Budget revision done as in 2009 and subsequent years	Evaluators comments on financial management are in section 3.2 above.
6 The Project should change the focus of the tourism sub-component away from tourism to concentrate instead on sustainable financing opportunities in general; and from a hands-on approach to one of planning, policy, and the generation of ideas for the	Accepted. The budget of 2009 will include recruitment of International Consultant on this issue. (2009 and following years)	Project suspended works on ecologic tourism. International consultant recruited who prepared business plan of Biosphere Reserve. Business plan included ecotourism. In 2011 Project completed work on ecotourism - prepared training materials on guiding	The MTE sought a move away from tourism to “ <i>sustainable financing in general</i> .” As reported by the PMU (and confirmed by UNDP), the project broadened its focus on tourism but did not explore other

management authority of the new Biosphere Reserve to take forwards.		tourists, trained guides and owners of guests houses.	sustainable financing opportunities.
7 The conceptual framework for, and the function of, the visitor centres should be very clearly defined and agreed prior to their construction and equipping.	Accepted. The Conception including functions and tasks of Visit and Information Centres will be updated and justified in detail by the end of 2008 and be submitted to UNDP CO. After its approval the project will start its realization. It will be necessary to recruit a Specialist for this issue on a full time basis. (Update of conception and submit it to UNDP CO by the end of 2008. The realization will start in 2009)	Project staff, with RSPB support, had a study tour to UK in 2008 to obtain an experience on Visit-Center concept. Based on this experience, concept of Visit-Center prepared and approved by UNDP CO. Visit-Center established in former Badaitugai administration building. Full maintenance work of the building implemented, office equipments and furniture procured. Official opening of Visit-Center held in world environment day where representative of parliament, government and ministries of Karakalpakstan participated.	The Visitor Centre facilities shown to the Evaluators are at an extremely early stage. However, the project does have detailed plans and clearly defined targets for the Visitor Centre. Unfortunately, the project has not had adequate time to develop these further and the vision and ideas for the Visitor Centre shared with the Evaluators, appear somewhat dull and uninteresting and may fail to attract and inform the visitors that are targeted.
8 The Project provide sufficient time and training to produce a highly professional cadre of trainers rather than rushing their training for an artificial Project deadline	Accepted. The project increases time for preparation of teaching materials and preparation of trainers and will coordinate conduction of further education and provide introduction of necessary additions/ amendments by the end of project completion. (2008-2011)	Project allocated more time to prepare training manual and training conduction. Training material on protection and sustainable use of biodiversity prepared in Russian and translated into Uzbek, Karakalpak. Trained about 200 employees of state, non-state institutions who are responsible in protection and sustainable use of biodiversity.	The recommendation sought a "highly professional cadre of trainers" but the project focused instead on the duration of training and the numbers trained. The training manual referred to by UNDP is useful in understanding biodiversity issues but it has not been peer reviewed and neither is it known whether it has resulted in a "highly professional cadre of trainers."
9 Key management staff of the Biosphere Reserve and from Goskompriroda (KK) and the Forestry Department (KK) receives training on the GIS after designation of the Biosphere Reserve and updating the GIs with existing information. Key field staff should be trained in the rudiments of data recording in such a way as to maintain the GIS up to date.	Accepted. The project anticipates establishment of BR next year. The Budget 2009 will include recruitment of GIS Specialist that will update the map with new layers. He will develop a data base on main characteristics of the territory (biodiversity, land users and etc.). Also, he will conduct training for main Goskompriroda personnel, Forestry Department personnel, Baday Tugai Zapovednik and BR personnel on obtaining of use of skills of GIS map and its date base. (2009-2010)	Project recruited GIS specialist, who prepared GIS and conducted training for employees of State Committee for Nature Protection and Forestry department of Karakalpakstan	The Evaluators did not sight the GIS, however, it would seem that the facility is being used only for electronic mapping rather than the plethora of services that a GIS is capable of.
10 The Project Indicators need to be re-examined and minor changes effected	Accepted. (First half of 2009)	Indicators changed in the first half of 2009 and new indicators included.	This is contrary to assurances given to the Evaluators that none of the elements of the LogFrame have been changed since the Inception Workshop.
11 A rigorous system of computer back-up, especially for the GIS, should be instigated with two back-up copies being stored in separate locations and backed up alternately. It would be preferable if one of these was stored within a fire-proof safe within the office. Similarly, back-up lists of computer passwords should be stored securely	Accepted. All project computers have installed back up copies in regular automatic regime. The project has procured the necessary amount of CD. Taking into consideration the increasing data the back up copying is carried out on a monthly basis. The copy of all data in kept in one of the computers. Procurement of fire-proof safe box for keeping of reserve CD is planned for the next year. (IV Quarter of 2008)	Materials are copied to DVDs	No comment
12 The Project should purchase a diesel-powered generator to supply the Project Office with electricity during	Accepted. The budget for 2009 will include the recommendation on procurement of equipment. It is necessary to define the required capacity	Power generator purchased in 2009 and regularly used by the project since then.	No comment

power cuts.	for the whole energy used equipment of the office. (By the end of 2008)		
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It would seem that the MTE did not lead to any significant adjustments except perhaps the extension of the project at no-cost.

3.4.4 Protected area monitoring and the METT

The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT²⁰) has become a standard approach for GEF Biodiversity projects dealing with protected areas. It assigns a score, on a four-point scale for Context, Planning, Inputs, Processes, Outputs, and Outcomes, and it is meant to show progress in the management regime for a specific Protected Area. However, as the original authors noted, “*The whole concept of ‘scoring’ progress is fraught with difficulties and possibilities for distortion*” and its limitations should therefore be acknowledged. It is not considered as an appropriate target or indicator of project progress; neither is it very reliable in comparing scores across different PAs.

However, the METT is a good indicator of the trend in management effectiveness of a particular protected area and the project has managed to obtain the best value out of the METT by repeating it three times – firstly at the project development stages (and carried in the ProDoc), then four years later on the occasion of the Mid-Term Evaluation, and finally three years further on for the Terminal Evaluation. It needs to be noted that as the GEF template for tracking effectiveness changed recently, it was not possible for the Evaluators to compare the original METT with the latest one carried out by the project because the two formats were different. However, on request from the Evaluators, the PMU re-did the METT using the old format and a comparison could now be made.

The following table shows the scores for each of three METTs through the life of the project, clustered by parameters. The table also contains minor comments from the Evaluators.

Table 8. Summary of METT scores, by categories, for Badai Tugai Zapovednik

PROTECTED AREA PARAMETERS	BADAI TUGAI			EVALUATORS' COMMENTS
	Oct 2004 ProDoc (Anstey)	Aug 2008 Sherimbetov	Jun 2011 Utemisov	
Context	11	12	15	A bit high – especially in terms of staff capacity; also, boundaries have not been set as far as is known. More realistic score = 13
Planning	3	4	9	Management Planning somewhat archaic. More appropriate score = 8
Planning (additional)	0	1	1	Key stakeholders include community and they cannot influence management. Score = 0
Planning/Outputs	1	1	3	
Inputs	6	7	9	Available budget considered too low. More accurate score = 7
Process	6	8	12	
Inputs/Process	1	1	2	Staff capacities not as high as claimed. More accurate score = 1
Outputs (additional)	0	0	0	
Outputs	0	3	2	Visitor facilities adequate for current modest numbers but these must rise and facilities then are inadequate. More appropriate score = 1
Outcomes	4	4	4	
Planning process	1	2	3	M&E and adaptive management not as good as claimed. More accurate score = 2
TOTALS	33	43	60	More accurate score = 53

In spite of the fact that there may be some minor difference of view between the PMU and the Evaluators on the exact score for specific parameters, the fact remains that the trend in METT scores is a very positive one and this is almost certainly as a result of the project interventions.

Protected area monitoring is considered to have been **Satisfactory (S)**.

²⁰ Stolton, Sue, Marc Hockings, Nigel Dudley, Kathy MacKinnon and Tony Whitten (2003) *Reporting Progress in Protected Areas - A Site-Level Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool*. World Bank/WWF Alliance for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Use. Washington.

3.4.5 Risks and assumptions

An assumption is an expectation that an ingredient external to the project but essential for project implementation will be present. A risk is the possibility that the ingredient will not be present. The ProDoc identified 10 risks, rated them in severity and provided mitigation measures. The PMU was invited to comment on whether the identified risks had eventuated and, if so, how they had been mitigated. The following table lists the risks and ratings from the ProDoc, carries the PMU reports and adds comments from the Evaluators.

Table 9. Risks

TYPE	DESCRIPTION OF RISK	RISK RATING	PMU REPORT ON WHETHER RISKS EVENTUATED AND HOW DEALT WITH	EVALUATORS' COMMENTS
Environmental	Lack of adequate water resources in the Amu Darya River to maintain or improve tugai coverage and quality, major droughts	<i>Significant risk within acceptable limits</i>	Though poorly enforced, the Government has standards of minimum water supply allocations for the ecological purposes. WB project reconstructed channel infrastructure that may improve the situation to a certain extent in Baday-Tugay Reserve. The project provided the sites of communal forestry with pipe wellings for watering of wood plantings and bought 1 small electric pump. The work on defining the critical sites is continued and they all will be supplied with watering. The project analyzed the work of the pump and collected opinions of local population. As a result of the analysis, 2 additional pumps were procured for communal forestry and 10 forest enterprises, thus to some degree the risk of water lack was reduced.	This is not a risk, but an existing situation and one of the root causes that the project was meant to address. The project appears to have misinterpreted this as a risk to project activities (communal forest plantings) and mitigated against it by providing pumping equipment. The PMU also argued that the irrigation equipment provided by the project could alleviate, directly and indirectly, the lack of water in the Tugai ecosystem. The Evaluators do not find artificial irrigation of the Tugai ecosystems as a realistic solution to this root cause/barrier.
Financial	The state budget cannot afford the establishment of another protected area and the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan is not supportive of it	<i>Medium risk</i>	Project prepared package of documents on BR establishment, where finance matters and 6 staff salaries included in BR budget. That was agreed with Ministry of Finance of Karakalpakstan, Council of Ministers of Karakalpakstan, Ministry of Finance of Uzbekistan. Above budgetary suggestions afterwards approved by the Resolution #243 on BR establishment of the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan.	The budgetary provisions for the Biosphere Reserve did not involve "new money", and staff positions were moved from elsewhere. This is accepted as a means of mitigation against this risk. In the long term, UNDP is confident that budgetary provisions will be increased.
	The Government of Karakalpakstan is not willing to take part in the financial/management responsibility for operations and maintaining of the PA activities	<i>Medium risk</i>	In Resolution #243 on BR establishment, it is indicated that management and financing of BR will be implemented from the budget of Uzbekistan. No financing is required from the budget of Karakalpakstan.	This risk (at the Karakalpakstan) level has been avoided by relying on the state budget at the Government of Uzbekistan level.
Operational	Local authorities are not supportive towards sustainable practices and conservation of biodiversity	<i>Low risk</i>	Project conducted pilot activities on sustainable use of biodiversity. District Khokimiyats supported those pilot activities that means they will continue supporting BR activities too.	The local authorities met by the Evaluators were very positive towards the project; this risk did not eventuate.
	Population is not responsive towards the proposed innovations and is not willing to actively participate	<i>Medium risk</i>	Population is actively involved in community forestry, lesser involvement in other project activities. It is important to note that first each pilot has to show positive result and based on that support can be received. Therefore more time is needed than project period. Project believes, after BR achieving positive results in its activities, it will be supported by the public.	Similar to many other GEF Biodiversity projects, the amount of time required to achieve a change in mindset at local government and community levels is underestimated. In the circumstances, the project has performed reasonably well.
	Pilot/demonstration initiatives will fail to successfully demonstrate viable alternative or improved livelihoods	<i>Medium risk</i>	Community forestry demonstrates advantage, and other project initiatives hopefully will also be supported during BR achieving positive results.	The project response to this risk is not very convincing and the risk remains.

Organizational	The Government of Karakalpakstan is not supportive of the establishment of the PA and/or Executing Agency is not proactive in pushing the decision on legal establishment of the new PA in ministries and agencies on the national level	<i>Low risk</i>	Government of Karakalpakstan supported BR formation, national executing agency actively promoted documents and as a result BR was established by the Resolution #243 dated 26 August 2011 of the Cabinet of Minister of Uzbekistan.	This risk did not eventuate, partly as a result of the hard work by project exponents in lobbying for the Biosphere Reserve.
	Insurmountable barriers to ensuring an integrated, inter-sectoral approach to Tugai management	<i>Low risk</i>	Establishment of Biosphere Reserve eliminated the risk. Biosphere Reserve and its stakeholders will jointly implement its management.	Responsibility for PAs in Uzbekistan is split between Goskompriroda and Leskhoz, and the risk remains. However, the fact that a project implemented by Goskompriroda has established a BR to be managed by Leskhoz, indicates that cooperation is possible.
Political	No commitment of Governments of Karakalpakstan and Uzbekistan to BR due to political reasons (eg. relations with UN organisations, international aid organisations)	<i>Low risk</i>	Government of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan supported BR establishment because of Project's consistent work on promotion of BR documents.	This risk did not eventuate, partly as a result of the hard work by project exponents in lobbying for the Biosphere Reserve.
	The Government of Uzbekistan does not support legal establishment of a NP/BR	<i>High risk within acceptable limits</i>	Government of Uzbekistan supported BR legal establishment because of consistent work of the Project and former Project Manager with all related department of the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan.	This risk did not eventuate, partly as a result of the hard work by project exponents in lobbying for the Biosphere Reserve.

The work of the project managed to avert the risks associated with acceptance of the concept of a Biosphere Reserve, however, other risks remain which could place the effectiveness of the Biosphere Reserve in jeopardy in the future. Among these are the acceptance of some of the sustainable use practices promoted by the project, the relationship between key government organizations with responsibilities for PAs, and sustainable financing for PAs.

Management of risks by the project is considered as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

4 FINDINGS: RESULTS AND IMPACTS

4.1 Results achieved

4.1.1 Project Objective

The Project Objective according to the ProDoc was: *To strengthen the Karakalpakstan system of protected areas through the enhanced enabling environment and establishment of a multi-zoned National Park which demonstrates the collaborative conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Amu Darya Delta and provides lessons and best practices replicable throughout the national protected areas system.*

This Objective was far too wordy and it was made more incisive and shortened by the Inception Workshop to read: *To strengthen the Karakalpakstan system of protected areas*

This Evaluation needs to answer the following key question regarding this Objective –

Has the Karakalpakstan protected areas system been strengthened as a result of the project?

And in seeking answers to this question, the Evaluators turned to the Indicators that were adopted by the Inception Workshop. These are analysed in the table below and used to reach an assessment of achievement of the Objective.

Table 10. Achievement of the Project Objective

Project Objective: <i>To strengthen the Karakalpakstan system of protected areas</i>		
Key questions to answer:		
• <i>Has the Karakalpakstan protected areas system been strengthened as a result of the project?</i>		
INDICATORS OF PROGRESS TOWARDS THE OBJECTIVE AS ADOPTED BY THE INCEPTION WORKSHOP	EVALUATORS' COMMENT ON THE INDICATORS ACCORDING TO THE SMART ²¹ CRITERIA	ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVE WITH REFERENCE TO THE INDICATORS ACCORDING TO THE PMU, FOLLOWED BY COMMENTS BY THE EVALUATORS
Coverage of tugai forest ecosystem under protected status (PA's forest area) Baseline: 3,950 ha Target: 17,000 ha	This Indicator is Specific to the Objective; it is also easily Measurable and could be Attributed to the project. A four-fold increase in the tugai forest under protection could clearly be claimed as an indication of a stronger Karakalpakstan protected areas system and the Indicator is also Relevant . The Indicator is presumed Time-bound , it can be Tracked and is seen as Targeted . This is a SMART Indicator.	From the PMU: As a result of the Project, Karakalpakstan system of protected areas (PA) much more strengthened. Total area of PA increased from 6462 he to 68,717.8 he. For the first time in PA, buffer and transitions zones formed, which are for sustainable use of biodiversity resources. For the first time Management Plan and Business plan of PA developed which will improve BR management and financing, that will be good model for other PA. PA field workers, Forestry management, State Committee for Nature Protection increased capacity because of trainings and seminars organized by the Project.
Populations of indicator fauna species maintained at the baseline level in the system of protected areas of Karakalpakstan Baseline: Bukharian deer (<i>Cervus elaphus bactrianus</i>) – 301 (2006) Target: Bukharian deer (<i>Cervus elaphus bactrianus</i>) – 301	This Indicator is not entirely Specific to the Objective; and while it can be Measured it may not be exclusively Attributed to the project. Bukharian deer is a flagship species but not necessarily an indicator species, and its maintenance at consistent numbers does not show whether the protected areas system of Karakalpakstan has been strengthened – the Indicator is not entirely Relevant to the Objective. So in spite of being Time-bound , Trackable and Targeted , this Indicator is not SMART.	Evaluators' Comments: The Evaluators agree with the PMU that the PA system in Karakalpakstan is stronger as a result of the project – the coverage is more extensive and fragmentation has been diminished through the BR model with its buffer and transition zones. However, the Evaluators wish to point out that the buffer and transition zones are not there “for sustainable use of biodiversity resources”, they are there to provide better protection to the strictly protected Badai Tugai reserve. The fact that they are managed in a sustainable manner is one of the major contributors to this additional protection.
Fragmentation of Tugai forests Baseline: 5 large blocks of tugai forests (only 1 protected) with no corridors between the blocks Target: All 5 large Tugai forest blocks protected and connectivity established through restoration of corridors (total area of corridors equal to at least 2,500 ha)	This Indicator is Specific to the Objective; it can be Measured and could be easily Attributed to the project. The Indicator is also very Relevant since the creation of corridors between currently fragmented tugai forest blocks is certainly a sign of a stronger Karakalpakstan protected areas system. The Indicator is presumed Time-bound by the project life, it can be Tracked and is also Targeted . This is a SMART Indicator.	
Taking the Indicators as a gauge of achievement of the Objective (at least two out of three), accepting the PMU self-assessment, reflecting what the Evaluators evidenced in field visits to project sites, and in answer to the above key question, the protected areas system of Karakalpakstan is considered to be stronger as a result of the project. Achievement of the Objective is therefore deemed to have been Satisfactory (S) .		

4.1.2 The Project Outcomes

Following is an assessment of the achievement/progress towards each of the five Outcomes. Each assessment starts by teasing out key questions that the assessment has to provide answers to. The Indicators specific to the Outcome, together with the Baseline and Targets as from the LogFrame agreed at the Inception Workshop and then listed and evaluated in terms of their compliance with the SMART criteria. This is followed by a column carrying the PMU self-assessment of progress. Finally, the fourth column comprises the Evaluators' discussion of findings leading to a rating on the six-point scale.

²¹ **SMART INDICATORS** – projects and programs should monitor using relevant performance indicators. The monitoring system should be “SMART”:

Specific: The system captures the essence of the desired result by clearly and directly relating to achieving an objective, and only that objective.

Measurable: The monitoring system and its indicators are unambiguously specified so that all parties agree on what the system covers and there are practical ways to measure the indicators and results.

Achievable and Attributable: The system identifies what changes are anticipated as a result of the intervention and whether the result(s) are realistic. Attribution requires that changes in the targeted developmental issue can be linked to the intervention.

Relevant and Realistic: The system establishes levels of performance that are likely to be achieved in a practical manner, and that reflect the expectations of stakeholders.

Time-bound, Timely, Trackable, and Targeted: The system allows progress to be tracked in a cost-effective manner at desired frequency for a set period, with clear identification of the particular stakeholder group to be impacted by the project or program

4.1.2.1 Outcome 1: A new mixed use protected area (a NP or Biosphere Reserve) established and fully incorporated into the Karakalpakstan protected areas system

Table 11. Analysis of the Indicators for Outcome 1, assessment of the progress achieved, and rating

Outcome 1: A new mixed use protected area (a NP or Biosphere Reserve) established and fully incorporated into the Karakalpakstan protected areas system			
Key questions:			
Q1.1 Has a new, mixed use protected area been established?			
Q1.2 it fully incorporated into the Karakalpak PA system?			
Q1.3 this as a result of the project?			
INDICATORS, BASELINES AND TARGETS	COMMENT ON THE INDICATORS ACCORDING TO THE SMART CRITERIA	RESULTS ACCORDING TO THE PMU SELF-ASSESSMENT	EVALUATORS' COMMENTS
<p>Indicator: Amu Darya Delta NP/BR in existence</p> <p>Baseline: One strict nature reserve protecting tugai forests ecosystem in Karakalpakstan too small to maintain viable wild flora and fauna species' populations of and sustain biodiversity values in the long run</p> <p>Target: A new protected area for conservation of tugai forests ecosystem along Amu Darya river in Karakalpakstan, containing core and mixed-use zones, has been legally established</p>	<p>This is not an Indicator, but part of the actual result that the Outcome is aiming for. It does not provide any further help in determining whether the Outcome has been achieved or not. It is easy enough to determine whether the Biosphere Reserve has been established or not and an indicator is not required. What might have benefited from indicators is a focus on "mixed use" and "fully incorporated".</p>	<p>The Lower Amudarya Biosphere Reserve (BR) established by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the republic of Uzbekistan #243 dated 26 August 2011. Based on that resolution the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan adopted Resolution #203 dated 28 August 2011</p> <p>Area of Tugai forests under the Protected Area status with surrounding lands has increased from 6462 he to 68717,8 he.</p> <p>Bukharian deer population increased from 274 to at least 666. This is a 2.5 times greater than the number in the first year of registration. Bukharian deer has completely disappeared in Karakalpakstan and only in Badai Tugay reserve being restored. To expand its quantity, for grant funds of WWF Open cage for deers constructed in Nazarkhan tugai (third territory of BR) for WWF funds. Calculated recommendations prepared on deer nursery in Esbergen-shiganak tugai.</p>	<p>The Outcome sought the establishment of a mixed use protected area and its incorporation fully into the Karakalpak PA system.</p> <p>The project has been successful in bringing about the declaration of the first Biosphere Reserve in Karakalpakstan/Uzbekistan and this is considered by stakeholders as a major achievement. It is a mixed use protected area since it incorporates a strict reserve (the Zapovednik), a buffer zone (which is somewhat restricted) and a transition zone, as is usual with Biosphere Reserves. However, the reserve has still to be registered with the Man & the Biosphere Programme of UNESCO.</p>
<p>Indicator: Management effectiveness (METT) score of the tugai PA</p> <p>Baseline: 38</p> <p>Target: 60</p>	<p>This Indicator is not Specific to the Outcome which said nothing about effectiveness; it is Measurable but there are strong caveats in using the METT in this manner. It is almost impossible to Attribute it to the project. The Indicator is Relevant and presumed Time-bound. It is also Trackable. However, it is not a SMART Indicator.</p>	<p>Badai-tugai natural reserve transformed into the Lower Amudarya Biosphere Reserve. Based on international experience, management plan prepared for BR.</p>	<p>It is unclear whether the new Biosphere Reserve can be said to be "fully incorporated" into the Karakalpak PA system. Indeed it is unclear what the project designers may have meant by this phrase. Faced by this situation, Indicators might have been helpful. However, out of the four indicators adopted for this Outcome, one is not an indicator at all and the other three do not possess the SMART characteristics.</p>
<p>Indicator: The number of poaching incidents (mean figure for the last 3 years on the proposed project territory)</p>	<p>This Indicator is not Specific to the Outcome; and while it is easily Measurable it is doubtful that it could be Attributed to the project. The Indicator is not Relevant to the Outcome which</p>		<p>In spite of all this, as the PMU self-assessment illustrates, the project has made significant progress towards the achievement of this Outcome and the only question remaining is its incorporation into the Karakalpak PA system.</p>

<p>Baseline: 108</p> <p>Target: Increase in the first 3 years as a result of increased capacity of the reserve staff to catch and record incidents and decrease towards the end of the project</p>	<p>sought the establishment of a mixed use PA – not better management or better ecological quality. The Indicator is presumed Time-bound, it can be Tracked and it could be considered as Targeted. However, this is not a SMART Indicator.</p>		<p>The PMU also refer to other achievements of the project such as the increase in the area of the protected estate and the increase in number of the re-introduced Bukhara Deer. While neither of these activities was required by the Outcome, they add value to the work of the project.</p> <p>Regarding key Q1.1, the BR has been established to a certain extent, but it is not clear if it has been fully incorporated into the Karakalpak PA system (Q1.2); and the project has been instrumental in bringing about the declaration of the BR (Q1.3).</p> <p>Progress towards the achievement of Outcome 1 is therefore considered to have been Satisfactory (S). The project has minor shortcomings in the achievement of this Outcome, in terms of effectiveness and efficiency as well as sustainability.</p>
<p>Indicator: The extent of human-caused fires (mean figure for the last 5 years on the project territory)</p> <p>Baseline: 150ha/year</p> <p>Target: 100ha/year</p>	<p>Just like the one above, this Indicator is not Specific to the Outcome; and while it is easily Measurable it is doubtful that it could be Attributed to the project. The Indicator is not Relevant to the Outcome which sought the establishment of a mixed use PA – not better management.. The Indicator is presumed Time-bound, and it can be Tracked. However, this is not a SMART Indicator.</p>		

4.1.2.2 Outcome 2: An improved legal and regulatory framework and a better understanding of biodiversity values enable institutions, farmers and other stakeholders to manage the protected areas system in a sustainable manner

Table 12. Analysis of the Indicators for Outcome 2, assessment of the progress achieved, and rating

Outcome 2: An improved legal and regulatory framework and a better understanding of biodiversity values enable institutions, farmers and other stakeholders to manage the protected areas system in a sustainable manner			
Key Questions:			
Q2.1 Has the legal and regulatory framework been improved?			
Q2.2 Is there better understanding of biodiversity values among institutions and farmers?			
Q2.3 Are they managing the PA system in a sustainable manner?			
Q2.4 Is all this as a result of the project?			
INDICATORS, BASELINES AND TARGETS	COMMENT ON THE INDICATORS ACCORDING TO THE SMART CRITERIA	RESULTS ACCORDING TO THE PMU SELF-ASSESSMENT	EVALUATORS' COMMENTS
<p>Indicator: % of the personnel of the State Committee for Nature protection, forestry department and the Baday-Tugai strict nature reserve understanding and clearly distinguishing the responsibilities of all state agencies involved in Karakalpak PA system management</p> <p>Baseline: 55%</p> <p>Target: 60%</p>	<p>This Indicator measures the capacity of institutions and their understanding of relative responsibilities – it does not address the legal/regulatory framework or personnel understanding of biodiversity values; neither does it address management in a sustainable manner. As such, the Indicator is not Specific to the Outcome; its Measurement is not easy and it cannot be Attributed to the project. The Indicator is not Relevant to the Outcome and although it is presumed Time-bound, can be Tracked and could be considered as Targeted, it is not a SMART Indicator.</p>	<p>Instruction manual on BR approved by #243 Resolution. In that instruction sustainable use and protection of resources identified, as well as promotion of sustainable use of BR resources and support of pilot activities.</p> <p>Information center in State Committee for Nature Protection of Karakalpakstan (SCNP) established. Maintenance work in SCNP premises done, office furniture and equipments purchased. Training and workshops being conducted in the information center.</p> <p>Business plan of BR prepared by foreign expert and to be used after appointment of BR management.</p> <p>Work on environmental education is continuously implemented. Seminars for students and local people on the value of tugais and biodiversity is held.</p> <p>Newsletter of the project, project calendar, a brochure about the Bukharian deer in 3 languages published.</p> <p>Assessment of carbon sequestration and carbon tugai forests conducted in the project area. Assessment conducted by the method adopted at the international level for such calculations. For tugai surface 30 907.4 hectares annually absorbed 27,089 tons of carbon or 99 309 tonnes of carbon dioxide.</p>	<p>The Outcome sought an improved legal/regulatory framework and better understanding among stakeholders so as to achieve management of the PA system in a sustainable manner. Indicators which measured the improvement in the legal framework, the level of understanding among stakeholders, and whether management was being carried out in a sustainable manner, would have been expected. Instead, the project design provided four indicators none of which was entirely SMART and therefore unhelpful to the project implementers.</p> <p>The results reported by the PMU focus on capacity building, raising of awareness, and carbon sequestration. This latter focus is seen as innovative thinking by UNDP since activities are aimed at developing baselines for possible participation of the BR in the carbon markets.</p> <p>The awareness raising activities of the project (such as its array of publications and publicity materials) and particularly its work with the school system is highly commendable and can be expected to lead to “a better understanding” as sought by the Outcome.</p> <p>In answer to Q2.1 regarding an improved legal and regulatory framework, UNDP sees the Resolution 243</p>
<p>Indicator: Level of satisfaction with the legal capacities that enable personnel of the entities involved in PA management to effectively fulfill their responsibilities and duties</p> <p>Baseline: 48%</p> <p>Target: 66%</p>	<p>This Indicator measures satisfaction with capacity to perform duties and responsibilities. This is not an indication of improvement in the legal/regulatory framework as sought by the Outcome; neither it is a measure of management in a sustainable manner. The Indicator, therefore, is not Specific to the Outcome; its Measurement is not easy and it cannot be Attributed to the project. Neither is it Relevant to the</p>	<p>Assessment of carbon sequestration and carbon tugai forests conducted in the project area. Assessment conducted by the method adopted at the international level for such calculations. For tugai surface 30 907.4 hectares annually absorbed 27,089 tons of carbon or 99 309 tonnes of carbon dioxide.</p>	<p>The awareness raising activities of the project (such as its array of publications and publicity materials) and particularly its work with the school system is highly commendable and can be expected to lead to “a better understanding” as sought by the Outcome.</p> <p>In answer to Q2.1 regarding an improved legal and regulatory framework, UNDP sees the Resolution 243</p>

	Outcome. It is presumed to be Time-bound , and may be able to be Tracked , but it is not a SMART Indicator.		and the Statute of the BR as good examples, while noting that the legal and regulatory framework for PAs is being addressed by another GEF Biodiversity project started 2 years after Tugai. Q2.2 sought a better understanding of biodiversity values among institutions and farmers, and we found that although on a limited scale, some understanding was evident. However, it was not evident that they were managing the PA system in a sustainable manner (Q2.3), and whether any improvements were the result of the project (Q2.4) the answer is probably yes.
<p>Indicator: Level of understanding of Tugai forest biodiversity values among decision makers and general public</p> <p>Baseline: 48% of decision makers; 51% of general public</p> <p>Target: 60% of decision makers; 80% of general public</p>	<p>This Indicator is measuring precisely what the Outcome set out to do. It is therefore Specific to the Outcome. It may not be easy to Measure and may be difficult to Attribute to the project. The Indicator is Relevant to the Outcome, it is presumed Time-bound, can be Tracked and it could be considered as Targeted. This Indicator is an almost SMART Indicator.</p>		<p>As a result of our investigations and with the benefit of the PMU self-assessment we find that progress towards this Outcome can be considered as Moderately Satisfactory (MS) which means that the project has moderate shortcomings in the achievement of the Outcome, in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.</p>
<p>Indicator: Level of NGOs and local communities involvement in PA management and/or monitoring activities according to the management plan</p> <p>Baseline: Currently no gazzetted cases of NGO or local communities involvement into PA management in Karakalpakstan</p> <p>Target: At least two real legal mechanisms of NGOs and local communities participation in the management of the tugai PA are created and functioning</p>	<p>This is an Indicator of co-management and while relevant to the project, it is not Specific to this Outcome. It may be Measurable but it is not easy to Attribute to the project. The Indicator is not Relevant to this specific Outcome which NGO and community involvement. The Indicator is presumed Time-bound, and can be Tracked. It could also be considered as Targeted. However, this is not a SMART Indicator.</p>		

4.1.2.3 Outcome 3: New viable co-management approaches and sustainable land use practices within NP/BR buffer zone are demonstrated and documented for further replication

Table 13. Analysis of the Indicators for Outcome 3, assessment of the progress achieved, and rating

Outcome 3: New viable co-management approaches and sustainable land use practices within NP/BR buffer zone are demonstrated and documented for further replication			
Key Questions:			
Q3.1 Have new co-management approaches been demonstrated and documented in buffer zone?			
Q3.2 Have sustainable land use practices been demonstrated and documented in the buffer zone?			
Q3.3 Are they likely to be replicated?			
Q3.4 Is this as a result of the project?			
INDICATORS, BASELINES AND TARGETS	COMMENT ON THE INDICATORS ACCORDING TO THE SMART CRITERIA	RESULTS ACCORDING TO THE PMU SELF-ASSESSMENT	EVALUATORS' COMMENTS
<p>Indicator: Number of private sector players (farmers, households, etc) engaged in sustainable practices on the project territory throughout life of the project</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: 5</p>	<p>This Indicator is Specific, in principle, to the Outcome since it measures the extent of sustainable land use practice being applied by the private sector. It can be Measured and can be easily Attributed to the project. The Indicator is also Relevant since sustainable land use practices can be expected to have a beneficial effect on the Tugai ecosystem. The Indicator is presumed Time-bound by the project life, it can be Tracked and is also Targeted. This is a SMART Indicator</p>	<p>Illegal use of tugai resources decreased from 118 to 82 Number of fires decreased from 80 he/year to 0 he/year Project analyzed tourism potential of Karakalpakstan. Supported establishment of three guest houses, developed seven tour products, conducted training of tour guides and owners of guest houses.</p> <p>Work on sustainable agriculture is continuously implemented in two project areas (Amudarya and Kanlikol districts). Laser leveling and seeding performed by no-tillage method in Amudarya district on 1.5 hectares of the special no-till planter. In Kanlykul area with support of the GEF SGP, 25 hectares are utilized under no-tillage. Conducted three field days where farmers explained with the essence of no-tillage methods for assessing soil. Practical proposals for the development of sustainable agriculture performed.</p>	<p>The Outcome sought the demonstration of co-management, and sustainable land use practices such that they could be documented and disseminated for replication.</p> <p>According to the World Parks Congress²² co-managed protected areas are defined as protected areas where management authority, responsibility and accountability are shared among two or more stakeholders, including government bodies and agencies at various levels, indigenous and local communities, non-governmental organizations and private operators. The project has put a different interpretation on the term “co-management” – the focus is on parallel, multiple-use management, albeit on a sustainable basis. And none of the Indicators address co-management.</p>
<p>Indicator: Number of verified cases of voluntary switch from “tugai” wood fuel to other sources of energy</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: 5</p>	<p>This Indicator is directly Specific to the Outcome since it Measures actual sustainable (at least as far as Tugai is concerned) practices as sought by the Outcome. However, there is a possibility that it may not be Attributable to the project since the switches must be voluntary. The Indicator is</p>	<p>Four Council of forestry created in four districts. Tenants of community forestry rented 87 he of degraded land. Forest plantations held in 65 he. Plants and 13 water pumps purchased for watering tugai areas and community forestry. Forest replanting held in 27 he. Brochure on community forestry, training manual for managers which explains principles of community forestry were published.</p> <p>Sustainable livestock implemented – artificial insemination of cattle</p>	<p>As for sustainable land use practices, “no tillage” as promoted by the project does not seem to be very popular – the Evaluators were advised that some farmers had reverted to ploughing; and, while changing from Tugai timber to gas is very beneficial to the Tugai ecosystem, it is not sustainable, strictly speaking. And, the “sustainability” benefits of artificial insemination are extremely indirect.</p> <p>The Evaluators have some concerns regarding the “community</p>

²² World Parks Congress 2003, Durban, Recommendation 25 : Co-management of Protected Areas. <http://www.earthlore.ca/clients/WPC/English/grfx/recommendations/PDFs/r25.pdf>

	<p>Relevant to the Outcome and is presumed Time-bound by the project life. It can be Tracked and is also Targeted. This is a SMART Indicator</p>	<p>in two pilot farms. Three zoovetservices equipped for treatment and artificial insemination of cattle with highly productive semen.</p> <p>Energy efficiency and conservation work implemented. Energy efficient house in straw blocks constructed which decreased energy use by 4 times. Two houses insulated using local materials which decreased energy use by 2 times. Fuel briquettes from biomass introduced. Six gas distribution units constructed that decreased use of tugai woods. Local entity "Berdakhenergosservice" established jointly with GEF-SGP, which is specializing in energy efficient equipment production. Grant funds procured equipment and materials. The entity produces energy efficient units and equipments for the local population</p>	<p>forestry" activity – the planting of exotic fruit trees appears to be promoted by the project on Tugai ecosystem land, so called degraded, but possibly just a manifestation of the gradation of Tugai from lush forest growth near the river to scrub and savannah-like environments near where it merges with the desert. The Nuratau-Kyzylkum project environment (from which the Tugai project has learnt) had indigenous fruit trees such as walnut, almond, apple, apricots, but the Tugai situation is different.</p> <p>Regarding the insulation of houses in an effort to reduce energy needs, we noted that only the walls were insulated, leaving the windows, ceilings/roofs and floors wide open to heat loss.</p> <p>The project has carried out a substantial amount of work under this Outcome (in spite of the drastically reduced budget) and some progress has been achieved, but in answer to the above key questions – we do not feel that co-management approaches have been demonstrated and documented in the buffer zone (QA3.1). We are also uncertain about the sustainable land use practices that have been demonstrated and documented in the buffer zone (Q3.2), and there is still a question as to whether, how and by whom they are going to be replicated (Q3.3). However, we acknowledge that whatever has been done would not have happened without the project (Q3.4).</p> <p>Although the project has moderate shortcomings in the achievement of this Outcome, particularly in terms of effectiveness, in recognition of the sheer volume of work carried out by the project, we rate progress towards Outcome 3 as Moderately Satisfactory (MS).</p>
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4.1.2.4 Outcome 4: Local and regional government institutions and NGOs have the capacity to effectively manage the NP/BR and support sustainable approaches to natural resource utilization

Table 14. Analysis of the Indicators for Outcome 4, assessment of the progress achieved, and rating

Outcome 4: Local and regional government institutions and NGOs have the capacity to effectively manage the NP/BR and support sustainable approaches to natural resource utilization			
Key Questions:			
Q4.1 Do local and regional government institutions have the capacity to manage effectively?			
Q4.2 Do local NGOs have the capacity to manage effectively?			
Q4.3 Can they support natural resource utilization?			
Q4.4 Is this as a result of the project?			
INDICATORS, BASELINES AND TRAGETS	COMMENT ON THE INDICATORS ACCORDING TO THE SMART CRITERIA	RESULTS ACCORDING TO THE PMU SELF-ASSESSMENT	EVALUATORS' COMMENTS
<p>Indicator: Percentage of staffing in the relevant institutions (Goskompriroda, Forestry Department, NGOs, etc) that meet the competence and skills required for the following occupational levels: Level 5: Director Level 4: Managerial, Project management and or high level technical Level 3: Technical Supervisory and/ or mid-level technical Level 2: Skilled worker, technical functions with some team leadership Level 1: Laborer , non-technical functions</p> <p>Baseline: Level 5 - 51 % Level 4 - 49 % Level 3 - 40 % Level 2 - 30 % Level 1 - 20 %</p> <p>Target: Level 5 - 66 % Level 4 - 66 %</p>	<p>This Indicator is not entirely Specific to the Outcome since there is no indication as to the actual measurement of competence and skills (it requires another indicator). It can be Measured but uncertain whether it can be Attributed to the project. The Indicator is Relevant since it targets capacity and skills. It is presumed Time-bound by the project life, it can be Tracked and is reasonably Targeted. This is not a SMART Indicator.</p> <p>It also needs to be pointed out that the Indicator is accepting that 34% of the Directors in relevant institutions, do not have the competence or skills required – this is a matter for concern.</p>	<p>To increase the capacity of employees in state institutions and NGOs a training manual on sustainable use of biodiversity prepared and training for all seven target groups conducted. About 200 people trained in total. Materials presentations, modules were prepared for teaching directly on the field in 2011.</p> <p>Constantly raised awareness of employees of state agencies, NGOs, schoolchildren and the public. Presentations on sustainable use of natural resources at seminars and Project steering committee, reports, project publications, considerably increased awareness of tugai forests.</p> <p>Visit center of BR which opened in 2011 June which will allow public to obtain information on biodiversity and sustainably use it. Study tour on visit centers of BRs in UK conducted. Representatives of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, National Project Coordinator and two project staff participated in the study tour.</p>	<p>The Outcome sought an assurance that local and regional government institutions and NGOs can manage effectively and, according to the PMU self-assessment, the project delivered training sessions, materials, etc. The project also raised awareness among employees. While these activities are admirable, unfortunately, training, manuals, handbooks, etc, are not a result, but a means through which the result (capacity to effectively manage) sought by the Outcome can be achieved. The two Indicators do not help; neither does an extract from a consultant's "report" provided by UNDP which provides a list of capacity building activities, the numbers participating and the questions asked , but nothing about the responses and whether these can be interpreted as a measure of capacity gained.</p> <p>The PMU also reported that the Visitor Centre has been open since June, but this was not the impression gained by the Evaluators when they visited – it was still under development (so close to project closure) and appeared to be aiming for a passive display approach. And, in any case, raising awareness of the general public was not targeted by this Outcome.</p> <p>We feel that none of the questions posed by this Outcome can be answered with any certainty and we rate progress towards this Outcome as Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU).</p>

Level 3 - 60 % Level 2 - 40 % Level 1 - 30 %			
<p>Indicator: Number of management and monitoring activities sub-contracted to NGOs according to the management plan</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: at least 2 cases</p>	<p>This Indicator is not Specific to the Outcome since it measures the contracts awarded to NGOs rather than their capacity to carry out those contracts. It can be Measured but it cannot be Attributed to the project. The Indicator is somewhat Relevant and is presumed Time-bound by the project life. It can be Tracked and is also Targeted. However, this is not a SMART Indicator</p>		

4.1.2.5 Outcome 5: Lessons and best practices on biodiversity conservation in Tugai protected area are replicated throughout the protected areas system in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan as a whole

Table 15. Analysis of the Indicators for Outcome 5, assessment of the progress achieved, and rating

Outcome 5: Lessons and best practices on biodiversity conservation in Tugai protected area are replicated throughout the protected areas system in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan as a whole			
Key Questions:			
Q5.1 Have lessons and best practices on biodiversity conservation in Tugai, been replicated?			
Q5.2 Has this been <u>throughout</u> the PA system in Karakalpakstan?			
Q5.3 Has this been in Uzbekistan <u>as a whole</u> ?			
Q5.4 Is this as a result of the project?			
INDICATORS, BASELINES AND TARGETS	COMMENT ON THE INDICATORS ACCORDING TO THE SMART CRITERIA	RESULTS ACCORDING TO THE PMU SELF-ASSESSMENT	EVALUATORS' COMMENTS
<p>Indicator: Level of awareness among personnel of other protected areas about management approaches developed and used in the Tugai Protected Area</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: 50%</p>	<p>This Indicator could have just as easily applied to Outcome 4 above. It is Specific, in principle, to the Outcome since it measures the extent to which personnel from other PAs are aware of the success of the project. Unfortunately, it does not measure whether replication has taken place at all. The Indicator can be Measured even though it would be interesting to know how awareness is going to be measured. It could be Attributable to the project and could also be considered Relevant since awareness could be the result of replication (although that is not necessarily so). The Indicator is presumed Time-bound by the project life, it can be Tracked and is also Targeted. This is not a SMART Indicator</p>	<p>Project experience presented at International Conference on Biosphere Reserve in Kyrgyzstan for representatives of PA of many CIS countries</p> <p>Project experience on community forestry, sustainable use of land and pasture submitted and published in materials of international meetings in Australia, Argentina, Russia and Turkey.</p> <p>Newsletter number 5, a calendar for 2011 with a description of project activities, a brochure on the cultivation of forage crops, on poster CITES, a brochure on the subject of Bukhara deer distributed by the project, UNDP CO, UNDP GEF project "Zapovedniki" in protected areas and their managing organizations such as Forestry Department and State Committee for Nature Protection of RUz.</p> <p>Manual on Protection and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, developed by the project, has been delivered to UNDP GEF project "Zapovedniki" for use in the training of eight nature reserves in Uzbekistan.</p>	<p>This Outcome is unrealistic in its language and over-optimistic in its expectations because it is targeting results which cannot be expected to be achieved by the project.</p> <p>The results reported by the PMU do not focus on the "replication" that is sought by the Outcome, but on the facilitation that it has carried out by making the project results known and by producing guidance material; and although this does not guarantee replication as sought by the Outcome wording, it does work towards it. One comment made to the Evaluators refers to replication of project results being carried out by another UNDP project, namely "Strengthening of the Sustainability of the National System of Protected Natural Areas by Focusing on Reserves" – while this a step in the right direction it does not indicate an institutional level of replication which was sought by the Outcome.</p> <p>Both SCNP and Forestry Department (Leskhoz) affirm their intention to replicate the "model" adopted by the project for future PAs. This confirms the catalytic role of the project.</p>

<p>Indicator: Lessons learned in co-management approaches published and used within the Protected Area system of Uzbekistan</p> <p>Baseline: 0</p> <p>Target: At least 3 Protected areas of Uzbekistan use experience developed in this project</p>	<p>This Indicator is also Specific, in principle to the Outcome since it measures the facilitation activity of the project towards the replication sought by the Outcome. It can be Measured although targeting 3 PAs is far short of “throughout the PA system in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan as a whole”. It can be easily Attributed to the project. The Indicator is also Relevant and Time-bound by the project life; it can also be Tracked and is Targeted. But it is not a SMART Indicator</p>	<p>Project manager and technical coordinator presented the achievements of the project on conservation and biodiversity for an international audience at the seminar in Bratislava (Slovakia) held in October 12-14, 2010 on Environment, biodiversity and ecosystem management, as well as at seminar in Astana (Kazakhstan) on 11-13 May 2011 on Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.</p>	<p>The PMU also reported on the broadcasting of project results internationally – this is not relevant to this Outcome which has a specific focus of Karakalpakstan and Uzbekistan.</p> <p>The Evaluators consider this Outcome as a flaw in the project design because it was overly ambitious and over-optimistic. And, in recognition of this and of what the project is known to have done towards replication, rate its progress towards the Outcome as Moderately Satisfactory (MS).</p>
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4.2 Awareness and information management

Low **awareness** was recognized by the ProDoc as a fundamental root cause of the many threats faced by the Tugai forest and ecosystem. However, while some awareness raising activities were planned under Outcomes 2 and 5, awareness is not addressed explicitly by project design in any of the Outcomes.

This omission did not stop the project implementers from carrying out numerous awareness raising activities including a number of seminars, meetings, round table discussions and a March for Parks. It is estimated that about 500 people (see attached Annex 6 for a full list of events) were reached by the project in one way or another. In addition to the various events, the project used other mechanisms to raise awareness, such as:

- Published more than 25 publications (Bulletins, booklets, handbooks, textbooks, and posters) mostly in local languages (see Annex 7).
- Created project website²³ where information on project activities and various reports are available.
- Established information centre in Karakalpak SCNP and made preparations for establishing an information centre at the Baday Tugai Zapovednik.
- Organized one round table discussion on Karakalpak TV and prepared a draft version of a documentary video film about project activities and the Reserve.

The project has made good progress on raising awareness of the Tugai ecosystem and biodiversity issues with a number of key audiences.

In spite of its hard work, the project has only reached a very small fraction of the estimated 100,000 people and around 20,000 families that live within the area of influence of the project. Unfortunately, these people do not use the internet and it is not possible for the project to distribute each publication to each family. Families in rural areas of Karakalpakstan usually have TV or radio and a regular (for example monthly or bi-monthly) newscast about biodiversity issues, the Biosphere Reserve and project activities would have helped to raise awareness, reduce the threats and facilitate replication of project results and approaches.

Information is closely allied to awareness and, like awareness, information has permeated the entire project. The Information Centre set up at the Karakalpak SCNP and the project website have served as flagships of information management for the project and as distribution points for the various publications. Unfortunately, the Evaluators were unable to ascertain the usefulness of the information for stakeholders, specialists, officials and the local population.

During the project, the Information Centre located at the Karakalpak SCNP did a very good job managing and distributing information and after project closure it is expected to serve as the first point of contact in Nukus for anyone seeking information on the BR. The objectives of the Centre have been well-worked out, the target audience identified, and a number of activities have been planned.

The excellent school initiatives by the project did not extend to professional colleges or universities – and this was probably a missed opportunity. The project could have collaborated with the relevant department of the Karakalpak State University or the Karakalpak Branch of Tashkent State Agrarian University and designed environmental education courses using the information obtained through the project as a start. During any follow-up initiatives, such an opportunity could be explored and taken further, for example, through partnership and twinning arrangements with foreign universities, for undergraduate and graduate students' internship or research programmes. If such a mechanism was set up, it could well be the ideal place to base an information centre.

Information management by the project has been adequate – **Satisfactory (S)**.

²³ The website www.tugai.uz could not be accessed by the Evaluators

4.3 Project impacts

4.3.1 Impact analysis

Outputs are the **immediate products** of the project's activities usually within the direct control of the project to deliver; **Outcomes** are the **short to medium term effects** of a project's outputs and are expected to outlive the project; whereas **Impacts**, are the **long-term effects** resulting from a project.

The achievements of Outputs which lead to Outcomes is assessed by LogFrame analysis which is mainly carried out by the Project M&E System, and confirmed by the TE with reliance on good Indicators. The conversion of Outcomes to Impacts often requires an Intermediate stage and this is assessed mainly by TE methodology. It is predicated by Assumptions, and is dependent on Impact Drivers which include Relevance, Sustainability and Catalytic effects.

This project is very much a foundational project and although it built substantially on the results achieved by the Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biodiversity Project, it had to establish foundations of its own in Karakalpakstan. It has broken new ground with the declaration of a Biosphere Reserve, but most other activities were at pilot scale, or demonstration level, or putting in place capacity – the results and impacts have yet to come, through other interventions. The project relies on others to replicate its achievements and achieve impact, however, there is no denying its catalytic role.

4.3.2 Global perspectives and environmental impact

The Tugai forests of Central Asia are a globally endangered ecotype resulting from a very specific combination of bio-geographic and climatic conditions found nowhere else in the world – specifically, the combination of large rivers within extremely dry temperate deserts, together with a location where the ranges of many species from India, Eurasia and even Africa meet. The result is a complex of forest, wetland, river and desert ecosystems which is unique and if it is not protected here, it cannot be protected anywhere else²⁴. In addition to this distinctive combination of ecosystems, many species are in themselves rare or endangered including a total of approximately 33 IUCN Red Data Book species (5 plants, 6 fish, 1 reptile, 14 birds, and 7 mammals). As a result, tugai ecosystems fall within the WWF Global 200 list (Eco-region 134)²⁵ and are undoubtedly of significant global biodiversity value.

Against this background, the GEF approved this project under its Operational Program: OP 3 – Forest Ecosystems; and Strategic Priority BD1- Catalyzing the Sustainability of Protected Area Systems. Under OP 3, the type of interventions that the GEF expected were:

- Demonstration and implementation of innovative financial mechanisms
- Legal, policy & regulatory changes
- Institutional development
- Community-indigenous initiatives
- Removing barriers to public-private partnerships

This project did not address innovative financial mechanisms, or public-private partnerships. It focused on policy changes to enable the establishment of a Biosphere Reserve, some institutional development, as well as community-indigenous initiatives.

The project has achieved some results of global importance and prepared the way for many more.

²⁴ http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/pa/pa1311_full.html

²⁵ <http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/g200/g134.html>

4.3.3 National level impacts

The number of people in Karakalpakstan who depend on the Tugai ecosystem directly or indirectly for their livelihoods and well-being is estimated to be more than 100,000 just in the project territory and the project has benefitted them all. More specifically, the project has -

- provided six natural gas distribution units for several families,
- supported establishment of three guest houses,
- three zoo veterinary points equipped for treatment and artificial insemination of cattle,
- work on sustainable agriculture is implemented in project area,
- 13 water pumps purchased for watering Tugai areas,
- two houses insulated using local materials which decreased energy use by 2 times
- local entity “Berdakhenergосervice” established jointly with GEF-SGP, which is specializing in energy efficient equipment production

Any replication of project results will extend the positive impact on the lives of more people in Karakalpakstan and other regions of Uzbekistan.

Other positive impacts of the project at the national level revolve around the Tugai ecosystem. For example, the establishment of the BR can lead to a reduction of surface runoff to rivers and lakes from the surrounding lands and so play a significant role in the prevention of silt accumulation in the Amu-Darya and its tributaries. In addition, woodlands significantly reduce evaporation from the collector-irrigation system; increase humidity in the lower air layer; and thus reduce the amount of water needed for irrigation. The Tugai woodlands also act as an important environmental regulator at a micro level, and as a natural barrier against wind-blown sand. Protection of the Tugai forest has a beneficial impact on crop yield by enhancing the hydro-regime and decreasing salinization. Stabilization of the riverbanks by Tugai forest also reduces erosion by the river and prevents rapid changes of the river course, which may destroy farmland and infrastructure.

5 FINDINGS: EFFECTIVENESS²⁶ AND SUSTAINABILITY

5.1 Effectiveness of project execution

UNDP (*op. cit.*) sees Effectiveness as a measure of the extent to which the project’s intended results (outputs or outcomes) have been achieved.

The ProDoc does not identify an intended end-of-project situation, however, one has been gleaned by the Evaluators from the discussions in the ProDoc and the objectives, targets and results envisaged by the project designers. The five elements of the end-of-project situation are listed in the table below together with comments from the Evaluators on the extent to which they are seen to have been achieved.

²⁶ According to GEF guidance, “*Relevance and effectiveness will be considered as critical criteria. The overall outcome rating of the project may not be higher than the lowest rating on either of these two criteria. Thus, to have an overall satisfactory rating for outcomes a project must have at least satisfactory ratings on both relevance and effectiveness.*”

Table 16. Effectiveness of project execution as measured against end-of-project expectations (gleaned from the ProDoc)

END-OF-PROJECT EXPECTATIONS	EVALUATORS' COMMENTS
1 New approaches to protected areas development and management demonstrated and the current and future threats to Tugai biodiversity and the sustainability of local natural resource use addressed through the development of an integrated resource management system. Specifically, a national park or Biosphere Reserve established which incorporates all the remaining significant remnants of Tugai forest and the corridors between them and provides an administrative and planning/management framework for improving natural resource use by local populations.	The Biosphere Reserve as targeted by the project has been declared by decree although it still has to be registered with the Man & the Biosphere Programme of UNESCO. Not all remaining significant remnants of Tugai forest were able to be incorporated in the BR, however, the three that were, are now linked, at least in principle, by contiguous corridors.
2 A positive legal framework for effective protected areas management involving building on existing legislation and ongoing resource use reforms being pursued by the government. An increase in the level of awareness and understanding by decision makers, resource users and the general public of the conservation values and issues.	The project has not made any gains on the legislation framework. Awareness and understanding have been increased.
3 New approaches to achieving sustainable natural resource use in the communities directly impacting tugai resources demonstrated and tested and providing practical management models for reducing threats to biodiversity and generating revenue for protected areas management.	The project has demonstrated and tested new approaches, however, their value towards sustainable natural resource use is not certain.
4 The limited individual capacity and weak and inefficient institutional framework responsible for natural resource management in Karakalpakstan addressed through the development of new approaches to integrated natural resource management and by building the regional and local institutional capacity to deliver it.	The project has carried out numerous workshops, training sessions and other capacity building activities, however, the level of application of this knowledge and know-how is unknown.
5 The experience and lessons learned from the establishment and practical initial management of the NP/BR are distilled, that opportunities for replicating good practices are identified within the region and country and this information is effectively disseminated to those responsible for the development and management of both the Karakalpakstan and national protected areas systems.	The project sees its training and capacity building as a way of preparing for replication, however, the list of project publications provided by the project, does not include anything identifiable as an evaluation of the pilots and demonstrations, or manuals/handbooks to be used by replicators.

In terms of the first expectation, the project has been effective in obtaining the declaration of a BR, even if the area designated is smaller than originally envisaged. The second expectation was in reality two discrete expectations – while awareness has been effectively increased, the project has not been effective with the legislation framework. The project has effectively demonstrated and tested new approaches although their effectiveness towards sustainability may be in question. Under the fourth expectation, the project has been effective in carrying out the training, but the effectiveness of application remains to be seen. Finally, the project does not seem to have been very effective in its facilitation of replication under the fifth expectation.

Overall, effectiveness of project execution is considered to have been **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

5.2 Sustainability of the project results and benefits

Sustainability measures the extent to which benefits continue, within or outside the project domain, from a particular project or programme after GEF and other assistance has come to an end. The Evaluators are required to determine the prospects for sustainability on a number of dimensions of the project outcomes and rate them as follows:

Likely: There are no risks affecting this dimension of sustainability

Moderately Likely: There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability

Moderately Unlikely: There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability

Unlikely: There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability

5.2.1 Institutional sustainability

The project must strive for its philosophies, approaches and other foundational products to be accepted and internalized by the key institutions and mainstreamed within their core activities. The Evaluators were assured of the commitment by the two key central government agencies responsible for Biodiversity and PAs; we also found a good level of institutional commitment at Khokimiyat level in the Districts. We were assured that they intend to continue the work of the project. However, according to the PMU, it is these same administrations (Beruniy and Nukus) who objected to the pilot sites on sustainable land use and they had to be closed.

The Government (Karakalpakstan and Uzbekistan) has indicated its commitment by passing the decree setting up the BR. However, a lot of work is still required before sustainability can become reality, especially in the areas of BR planning and management, sustainable land use, and the implementation of co-management.

Institutional Sustainability of project benefits is **Moderately Likely (ML)**.

5.2.2 Financial sustainability

Those institutions and individuals who are to inherit the legacy of the project are dependent on funds becoming available to sustain the products and services of the project. For this, they rely on financial sustainability which is not yet secure. This is acknowledged by those who will continue the work in PAs and they refer to the BR Business Plan as a source of advice for future additional funding. Many that we spoke to invariably brought up the matter of additional support being required, especially financial support, and they mentioned their concern about shrinking government budgets. The only financial sustainability observed by the Evaluators was in the SMEs established with project help in the private sector (e.g. the veterinary centres and Berdah Energoservis). However, there is a commitment to inherit the responsibility for seeking additional financial support.

Financial sustainability is a concern and we rate it as **Moderately Likely (ML)**.

5.2.3 Ecological sustainability

Ecological Sustainability of the Badai Tugai strictly protected area (zapovednik) is considered as **Moderately Likely (ML)**. However, we cannot say the same for the areas outside the zapovednik, namely the buffer zone and the transition zone. We are uncertain as to whether the responsible institutions have the capacity and the know-how to implement true co-management, and monitor and support compliant farmers and other land owners who require guidance on how to manage their land in harmony with the BR principles and requirements. We also have some concerns regarding the interpretation of ecological principles by the project e.g. manipulation of species, lack of land use planning, and some potentially conflicting activities such as artificial insemination (which could lead to an increase of stock numbers) and community forestry (which is converting Tugai scrub and savannah into exotic plantations).

Ecological sustainability outside the zapovednik is **Moderately Unlikely (MU)** under the present conditions.

5.2.4 Sustainability plan

The ProDoc discussed sustainability of project products at some length and even planned for a ...

“Staged Withdrawal from Technical and Operational support: based on the experience of the other Biodiversity MSP under implementation in Uzbekistan, the project incorporates a plan for a staged

withdrawal of technical and financial support for key institutions and activities over time allowing a gradual transition to their independent operation”.

The Evaluators are not aware of any such plan. In fact, as far as we can tell, the project has no exit strategy, no sustainability plan. And, for a project which relies on replication of its demonstration approaches and upscaling of its pilot activities to achieve its impact, the lack of an effective exit strategy or sustainability plan, is of great concern.

Risks to sustainability remain high and a robust Exit Strategy or Sustainability Plan is essential even at this late stage.

An effective Exit Strategy / Sustainability Plan should aim for:

- a structured close-down of the project
- a managed handing-over of responsibilities to competent entities
- a needs assessment of those entities inheriting project benefits and capacity building if required
- a rational allocation of assets with recognition and receipts, to support continuation of project activities
- an exchange of appreciation and commitment letters
- a financial sustainability strategy
- an effective knowledge management system
- more recognition of the abilities of the communities and their meaningful involvement in this

We were encouraged by the plans shared with us by UNDP regarding follow-up activities planned after project closure. This follow up will need to make secure the future of the project results and products by finding appropriate inheritors to accept them, help build on what the project established and thrust it into the future.

As a first step in this follow-up it is suggested that either through the use of remaining project funds or through the new funds to be made available for follow-up by UNDP, an Exit Strategy Workshop should be organized. The Exit Strategy Workshop, which should be held sooner rather than later, must bring together all project personnel as well as those organizations and individuals who are identified as being in a position to continue with the work of the project. These must include key central as well as local government organizations as well as community forestry groups and other farmers associations and community groups. At the Workshop, each project team member needs to outline the work accomplished in their particular area of responsibility, and the outstanding work that still needs to be done. It is also necessary to identify the products/benefits/results achieved by the project and whether they can “live” on their own, or require a champion. Consensus then needs to be reached on who is taking over the responsibility both for unfinished work as well as for products and benefits that need to be “adopted” and sustained by someone else. It is most important that to the extent possible, a source of funding support is identified to ensure financial sustainability.

6 CONCLUSIONS, RATINGS SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions and ratings summary

CRITERION	CONCLUSIONS	RATING
PROJECT FORMULATION		
Concept and design	By not building activities around the root causes directly, project design may have addressed the symptoms rather than the causes and its benefits could be short-lived	MS
Stakeholder participation in project formulation	Stakeholders were involved extensively in project formulation activities through consultation, workshops and commenting on drafts	S
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
Project governance	The high number of members from the local government and community levels is a very positive element in project governance and the PSC has worked well	S
Project management and administration	Implementation of the Project appears to have been effective, with a particularly well-organised and highly motivated project team overseen by strong leadership.	S
Implementation Approach		
The LogFrame and adaptive management	Following the Inception Workshop the LogFrame did not change and there is not much evidence of adaptive management	MS
Stakeholder participation in implementation	Project design provided for the full involvement of stakeholders in the site and boundaries identification, the determination of zonation and regime definitions, management planning and implementation	S
Information management	Information management by the project has been adequate and it has put in place an effective Information Centre	S
Risk management	The project managed to avert the risks associated with acceptance of the concept of a Biosphere Reserve, however, other risks remain and could place the effectiveness of the Biosphere Reserve in jeopardy	MS
Project finances		
Financial planning and management	While the project has stayed within budget in spite of an extension of more than one year, the drastic revisions and reallocation of funds between Outcomes and Project Admin/Management, led the latter being almost a third of the total project budget	MS
Co-financing	Remaining co-fin cash is of some concern, but the PMU advises that it will be spent (during the next five weeks) for purchasing equipment for the Biosphere Reserve and we find that co-fin has been managed well	S
Monitoring and Evaluation		
M&E design, plan and budget	The project is fully compliant with the M&E requirements of the GEF regarding M&E planning and budgeting	S
Protected area monitoring	The trend in METT scores is a very positive one and this is almost certainly as a result of the project interventions	S
PROJECT RESULTS : Achievement of Objective and attainment of Outcomes, with reference to the Indicators		
Objective: To strengthen the Karakalpakstan system of protected areas	Taking the Indicators as a gauge of achievement of the Objective, accepting the PMU self-assessment, reflecting what the Evaluators evidenced in field visits to project sites, the protected areas system of Karakalpakstan is considered to be stronger as a result of the project.	S
Outcome 1: A new mixed use protected area (a NP or Biosphere Reserve) established and fully incorporated into the Karakalpakstan protected areas system	The project has minor shortcomings in the achievement of this Outcome, in terms of effectiveness and efficiency as well as sustainability	S
Outcome 2: An improved legal and regulatory framework and a better understanding of biodiversity values enable institutions, farmers and other stakeholders to manage the	The results focus on capacity building, raising of awareness, and carbon sequestration. Legal and regulatory framework not addressed and while the project's work with the school system is highly commendable, it does not extend to farmers and other	MS

CRITERION	CONCLUSIONS	RATING
protected areas system in a sustainable manner	stakeholders being able to manage the PA system	
Outcome 3: New viable co-management approaches and sustainable land use practices within NP/BR buffer zone are demonstrated and documented for further replication	The Evaluators recognize the sheer volume of work carried out by the project under this outcome, but we have some concerns about the methods used and the interpretation of “co-management”	MS
Outcome 4: Local and regional government institutions and NGOs have the capacity to effectively manage the NP/BR and support sustainable approaches to natural resource utilization	The Outcome specifically sought capacity in place to effectively manage, and while the project carried out training there is no indication that the required result has been achieved. The Visitor Centre is still under development (so close to project closure) and appeared to be aiming for a passive display approach	MU
Outcome 5: Lessons and best practices on biodiversity conservation in Tugai protected area are replicated throughout the protected areas system in Karakalpakstan and in Uzbekistan as a whole	Outcome wording is over ambitious – cannot be achieved within project lifetime. Project has carried out much facilitation towards replication, and served as a catalyst for PA management, but not much replication and certainly not to the extent targeted by the Outcome	MS
Relevance, Effectiveness and Sustainability		
Relevance	The project satisfies the UNDP definition of relevance. It is consistent with national and local priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries. However, the project design is not a perfect match with the needs as identified in the ProDoc in the form of threats, root causes and barriers. And, while Project implementers went further than the project design and addressed threats and root causes more directly, they still did not cover the whole spectrum	S
Effectiveness	The project was effective in obtaining the declaration of a BR, but the area designated is smaller than originally envisaged; awareness has been effectively increased, but the project has not been effective with the legislation framework; project has effectively demonstrated and tested new approaches but their effectiveness towards sustainability may be in question; the project has been effective in carrying out the training, but the effectiveness of application remains to be seen; the project has only been partly effective in its facilitation of replication	MS
Institutional sustainability	Good level of institutional commitment at central government and Hokimiyat level but although the decree setting up the BR has been passed, a lot of work is still required before sustainability can become reality, especially in the areas of BR planning and management, sustainable land use, and the implementation of co-management	ML
Financial sustainability	The only financial sustainability observed by the Evaluators was in the SMEs established with project help in the private sector; however, a commitment by key stakeholders augurs well for the future	ML
Ecological sustainability	Within the Badai Tugai Zapovednik ecological sustainability is Moderately Likely. However in the buffer and transition zones it is far from assured. It is unknown whether the responsible institutions have the capacity and the know-how to implement true co-management, and monitor and support compliant farmers and other land owners who require guidance on how to manage their land in harmony with the BR principles and requirements	ML/MU
OVERALL CONCLUSION AND PROJECT RATING	By the end of the project, the Protected Areas system of Karakalpakstan will be stronger as a result of the project. Therefore the project will have achieved its Objective. However, since this is a foundational project, its real benefits will be on a very limited scale and the project relies on others to replicate and upscale its results to a significant level. The pilots tested by the project and the demonstration models it has set up, enhance the chances of replication, but other barriers remain.	MS

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.2.1 Recommendation addressed to the PMU, Government and UNDP

Issue: Sustainability of project benefits

The project does not have a Sustainability Plan or Exit Strategy (although UNDP has follow-up plans, which are not the same) and its gains may be in jeopardy unless this is rectified.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the project should organize a Sustainability Workshop inviting all known stakeholders and others who may have an interest in the project's products, services and other benefits. At the Workshop, the PMU will outline the gains made by the project and seek an expression of interest from specific stakeholders for taking over and sustaining each gain. Ideally, this should be followed by an official exchange of letters handing over, and accepting, the responsibility.

6.2.2 Recommendation addressed to the PMU, Government and UNDP

Issue: Handing over of vehicles and equipment

As is the normal procedure at project closure, the project is in the process of handing over its assets to various organizations.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that in disposing of its assets, the project give priority to those organizations that are to continue with its work and sustain its benefits. This should be tied closely with the process recommended in 6.2.1 above.

6.2.3 Recommendation addressed to the PMU

Issue: Information management

The project has generated a good amount of data, information and knowledge some of which has been put out in publications, however, a lot is only found in electronic format and not readily accessible.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that in the same way as for vehicles and equipment, the PMU should identify an organization that is to inherit its data, information and knowledge. This cache must be well organized and handed over together with the associated hardware and software. An undertaking must be obtained that the cache must be made accessible to all who require it for the better management of Protected Areas, in particular Tugai ecosystems.

6.2.4 Recommendation addressed to the Government

Issue: Co-management of PAs

The project misinterpreted co-management which is meant to be the management of protected areas in a true and meaningful partnership between the authorities and the community. The need for this is now crucial with the adoption of buffer zones and transition zones which apply to land that has been inhabited by communities and on which they depend for their livelihood and quality of life.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that as part of the Protected Areas Strategy (see 6.2.5 below), the Government should remove the barriers that may exist to true partnerships with communities. This facilitation of co-management should range from a solid legal basis to physical and practical provisions.

6.2.5 Recommendation addressed to the Government and UNDP

Issue: National Protected Areas Strategy for Uzbekistan

The current Protected Areas System in Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan is mainly comprised of a number of elements without a clear overall vision, objectives or a cohesive approach. The project has prepared the way for replication of its approaches, pilots and demonstrations.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Government, with the assistance and support of UNDP, should strive to develop, adopt and implement a National Protected Areas Strategy with a focus on representativeness, robustness, and ecological integrity. Successful approaches, philosophies and procedures from this project can be applied across the Protected Areas System in Karakalpakstan and Uzbekistan.

6.2.6 Recommendation addressed to UNDP

Issue: Follow-up intervention

The project benefits will be on a very limited scale and the project relies on others to replicate and upscale its results to a significant level. A follow-up intervention is required to secure the investment made by the GEF and UNDP.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that UNDP proceed with its plans to carry out a follow-up intervention. Such an intervention should first create a bridge between this project and the next in the form of a sustainability plan (including the Sustainability Workshop). It should then focus on developing a National Protected Areas strategy and addressing the root causes not addressed by the project.