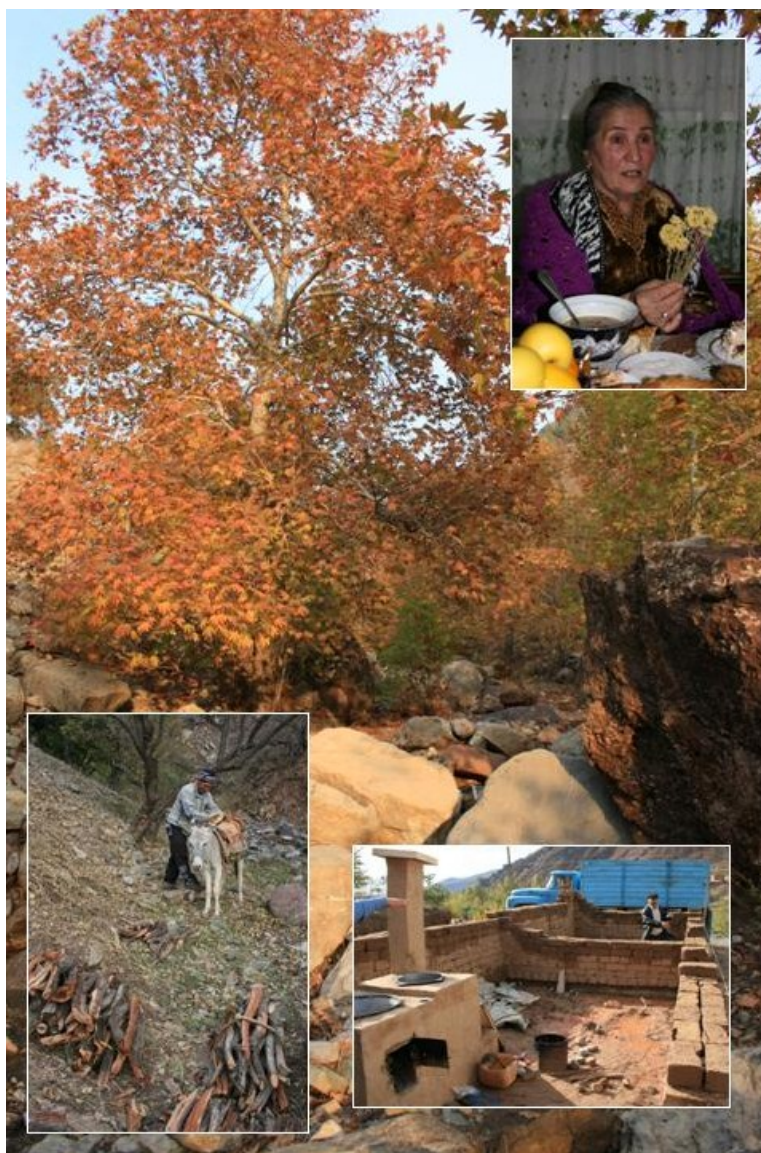




Terminal Evaluation

Atlas Project ID: 00048392; PIMS: 1768

**Demonstrating New Approaches to Protected Areas and
Biodiversity Management in the Gissar Mountains as a Model
for Strengthening the National Tajikistan Protected Areas System**



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The opinions and recommendations in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Committee of Environmental Protection and its agencies, GEF or UNDP. The consultants are responsible for any errors or omissions.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APR	Annual Progress Report
BD1	GEF Strategic Priority Biodiversity 1 – Protected Areas
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
CEP	Committee for Environment Protection
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CO	Country Office
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
GAAO	German Agro Action Organisation
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoT	Government of Tajikistan
GPC	Government Project Coordinator
ha	Hectare(s)
IPD	International Project Director
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
JRC	Jamoat Resource Centre (originally called Jamoat Resource and Advocacy Centre)
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool for PAs (World Bank/WWF)
MLF	Micro Loan Fund
MTE	Mid-term Evaluation
MTET	Mid-term Evaluation Team
NEX	Nationally Executed Project
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPM	National Project Manager
PA(s)	Protected Area(s)
PDF-A	Project Development Facility – Block A
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
STAP	Scientific Technical and Advisory Panel (GEF)
ToR	Terms of Reference
TRAC	Target for Resource Assignments from the Core
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US\$	United States Dollar
USA	United States of America

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brief description of Project

Demonstrating new approaches to Protected Areas and Biodiversity Management in the Gissar Mountains as a model for strengthening the national Tajikistan Protected Areas System is a medium-sized UNDP-GEF project that was implemented over a 5-year period, beginning in January 2006, and subsequently extended for 1 year until December 2011.

The **goal** of the Project, as defined in the Project Document, was “. . . to catalyze the improved conservation of globally significant biodiversity in Tajikistan through the demonstration of new mechanisms and approaches to effective management of protected areas and natural resources adjacent to them.” This would be achieved by strengthening management effectiveness and sustainability of 3 different types of protected area in the Gissar Mountains, thereby to provide models and best practices replicable throughout the national protected area system. The 3 main components to the Project concerned: (i) policy reform to provide an appropriate enabling environment; (ii) effective management of protected areas, including provisions for their financial viability; and (iii) the development of sustainable and/or alternative livelihoods for communities living in close proximity to protected areas.

The Project area falls within the Middle Asian Montane Steppe and Woodlands (Ecoregion No. 111), one of the Global 200 ecoregions identified by WWF as a priority for conservation of all of the world's ecosystems, as well as those areas that contain exceptional concentrations of species and endemics. It also lies within the Mountains of Central Asia, an area defined by Conservation International as one of 34 global biodiversity hotspots. More recently, since the onset of the Project, an analysis of the distribution and conservation status of 1,486 species of endemic and sub-endemic vascular plants in Tajikistan has shown that endemics are the most numerous in the Gissar-Darvasian geo-botanical region, corresponding to the Gissar Mountains, and the Zeravshan region immediately to the north.

Context and purpose of the evaluation

Terminal Evaluation is an integral part of the UNDP GEF project cycle. Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive, systematic and evidence-based account of the performance of the completed Project by assessing its design, process of implementation, achievements (outputs, outcomes, impacts and their sustainability) against project objectives endorsed by the GEF (including any agreed changes in the objectives during project implementation) and any other results. It is intended to enhance organizational and development learning; enable informed decision-making; and create the basis of replication of successful project outcomes.

This Terminal Evaluation was carried out by external international and national consultants in November – January 2011. It included 10 days in-country (1-10 November) meeting and interviewing stakeholders in Dushanbe and the Project area (Romit Zapovednik, Almosi Zakaznik and Shirkent Natural Historical Park), and well over 10 days of preparation, collection, collation and analysis of information and report writing. Key stakeholders included state and local government officials, notably protected area managers and jamoat/district representatives, Jamoat Resource Centres and other NGOs, and members of local communities. Preliminary findings were shared with Project partners at meeting on 10th November and met with general approval.

The Project's achievements (outputs and outcomes), sustainability of outcomes and its monitoring and evaluation system (design and application) were evaluated and scored with respect to either the level of satisfaction achieved or the likelihood of outcomes being sustainable at the Project's termination. Evaluations were based on testing progress and achievements against five major criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results and sustainability, as appropriate), in accordance with GEF requirements.

Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons

Overall, the Project is evaluated as **Satisfactory** with respect to **achieving its objective**. This is a particularly good result, given that the Project was rated as *Marginally Unsatisfactory* at its Mid-Term Evaluation, and reflects extremely highly of the ability and capacity of the Implementing Agency (UNDP) to take on execution of a failing project mid-term and turn it around through a series of fairly drastic measures, including provision of additional financial investment from its own resources. The result reflects equally and, indeed, extremely well on the client (Committee on Environmental Protection and its state agencies for Protected Areas and Forestry & Hunting), demonstrating their clear commitment and drive to facilitate delivery of the Project's outputs to benefit protection of globally and nationally important biodiversity and the well-being of local communities. The profile of protected areas has been raised significantly at national level within Parliament and government agencies, and locally within jamoats in the Project area. Key successes include:

- New protected areas law and Forest Code adopted by Presidential Order in 2011, the relatively quick passage of legislation being due to the establishment of inter-ministerial working groups to fast-track the process.
- Protected areas concept and framework for management planning prepared, approved and applied in participatory manner to Shirkent and Almosi. Also replicated elsewhere.
- Provide opportunities for local communities in vicinity of target protected areas to improve their livelihoods in ways that do not adversely impact on biodiversity by setting up Jamoat Resource Centres, supported by a Micro-Loan Foundation.

In the context of Project formulation, the **implementation approach** is evaluated as **Unsatisfactory** on account of the original selection of an Executing Agency with no professed competence in biodiversity conservation, the goal of the Project. The pragmatic choice of a humanitarian organisation, CARE International, already operating in the Project area proved to be short-sighted and resulted in the *Marginally Unsatisfactory* rating of the Project mid-term. **Stakeholder participation** is evaluated as **Satisfactory**, a wide range of governmental, non-governmental and community-based organisations have been involved in Project from the outset of its design and subsequently during the preparation of the Project Development Framework A.

In the context of Project implementation, the **implementation approach** is evaluated as **Satisfactory**, the strategic decisions and decisive actions taken in response to the Mid-Term Evaluation having secured a reprieve for a Project that had meandered off-course and was unlikely to meet many of its targets. Earlier strategically poor and technically unsound implementation has been overcome by the huge improvement in relevant technical competence, more strategic focus on the Project objective, and delivery of most outputs. The main short-coming is that many outputs have been delivered towards the end of the Project, with little or no opportunity to replicate the experience during the life of the Project for the benefit of Tajikistan's protected areas system and communities in the vicinity. **Monitoring and Evaluation** is evaluated as **Satisfactory**, particularly in respect of the Mid-Term Evaluation, which exposed weaknesses in Project implementation, and the application of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool, which introduced protected area managers to the value of monitoring and generated a common understanding among their staff of management priorities.

In the context of Project results, the **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impacts** of achieving the Project's objective are evaluated, respectively, as **Satisfactory**, **Moderately Satisfactory**, **Moderately Satisfactory**, and **Satisfactory**. The overall **sustainability** of the Project's 3 outcomes is evaluated as **Moderately Likely**, based on lower rankings (Moderately Likely) for financing protected areas and reducing pressures on their natural resources and higher rankings (Likely) for socio-political impacts among local communities, and changes/developments in institutional and governance mechanisms and partnerships.

Opportunities **to consolidate and reinforce** the benefits from the Project include the following:

- Further improve the regulatory framework for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use with respect to introducing a new Law on Pastures Management and revising the Law on Protected Areas, as well as Forestry Code.
- Mainstream biodiversity conservation across jamoats, under the auspices of UNDP's Energy and Environment Programme.
- Formalise partnership between Micro-Loan Fund and Jamoat Resource Centres to provide long-term interdependence and financial stability.
- Compile and disseminate guidance on lessons learned and best practice generated by this Project.
- Replicate management and financial plans across the rest of the protected area system.

In addition, new ground needs to be broken on a several fronts **to build** on the Project's achievements. Priorities for the PAs system should include the following:

- Incorporate **ecosystem services assessment** within management planning. This tool can also be used to assess the value of the entire PAs system, which can be helpful not only in promoting understanding among stakeholders but also in lobbying government for adequate resources to protect and maintain these global assets.
- Establish a **training and research centre for biodiversity conservation and management**, either in country or within the region.
- Develop a **sustainable tourism or ecotourism policy**, and a strategy for its delivery in the regions, beginning perhaps with the Gissar Mountains due to their proximity to Dushanbe.

UNDP Tajikistan is well respected and much appreciated by government, placing it in a strong position to encourage government to move forward in these directions, while offering to provide technical assistance, coordination and facilitation as appropriate.

Lessons to be learned from this Project concern the following:

- Selection of project executing agency using objective criteria, based on the relevant, necessary competencies and experience for the tasks involved, and ensuring that performance is monitored vigorously, especially during the early years.
- Where excessive delays are incurred between the formulation of a project (PDF-A) and its actual commencement, further resources should be made available to thoroughly review all design and funding aspects of the PDF-A that might otherwise jeopardise the delayed implementation.
- Medium and full-size GEF projects require at least a full-time, dedicated Project manager, supported by a Project Assistant, to ensure efficient implementation and effective delivery of quality assured outputs. Currently, there are signs of UNDP staff being significantly overstretched and handling large portfolios of projects, as the Country Office's programme has developed rapidly from a US\$ 4.4 million budget in 2003 to over US\$ 40 million in 2010. This is a management issue that needs to be addressed at an organisational level.
- Strong partnership working has underpinned much of the success of this Project during the latter half of its implementation. Much of this good practice, including a range of delivery mechanisms, should be included in the guidance recommended above.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The Monitoring and Evaluation Policy in UNDP/GEF has two overarching objectives at the project level, namely: to promote accountability for the achievement of GEF objectives through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes and performance of the partners involved in GEF activities; and to improve performance by the promotion of learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners, as a basis for decision-making on policies, strategies, programme management and projects.

The Terminal Evaluation is an integral part of the UNDP/GEF project cycle. Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of the completed Project by assessing its design, process of implementation, achievements (outputs, outcomes, impacts and their sustainability) against project objectives endorsed by the GEF (including any agreed changes in the objectives during project implementation) and any other results.

Terminal evaluations have four complementary purposes:

- i. To promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose levels of project accomplishments.
- ii. To capture and synthesize lessons that may help improve the selection, design and implementation of future GEF activities, as well as to suggest recommendations of replication of project successes.
- iii. To provide feedback on issues that are recurrent across the portfolio and need attention, and on improvements regarding previously identified issues.
- iv. 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 the quality of monitoring and evaluation across the GEF system.

To this end, the Terminal Evaluation is intended to:

- i. enhance organizational and development learning;
- ii. enable informed decision-making; and
- iii. create the basis for replication of successful project outcomes.

1.2 METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE OF THE EVALUATION

This Terminal Evaluation follows the *UNDP-GEF Project Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures*¹ and a specific Terms of Reference (**Annex 1**), while also taking into particular account the findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE). The evaluation process is independent of UNDP, GEF, Committee for Environment Protection (CEP) and Project partners. The opinions and recommendations in this Terminal Evaluation are those of the Evaluation Team, comprising one international and one national consultant, and do not necessarily reflect the position of UNDP, GEF, CEP or any other Project stakeholders. Once accepted, the Terminal Evaluation becomes a recognised and publicly accessible component of the Project's documentation.

The Terminal Evaluation is an evidence-based assessment of the Project concept and design, its implementation and its outputs, outcomes and impacts as documented in the Project Logical Framework, which provides indicators and targets for measuring success in implementation. It has been undertaken in line with GEF principles concerning independence, credibility, utility, impartiality, transparency, disclosure, ethical, participation, competencies and capacities².

¹ This has been updated and superseded recently by the *UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF-Financed Projects*, 2012, which was referred to where clarification was required.

² *The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*, 2010.

The Terminal Evaluation was carried out by the Evaluation Team in November - December 2011. It comprised: 10 days in-country (1-10 November inclusive) meeting and interviewing partners and other stakeholders in Dushanbe and in the field at each of the 3 Project sites; and over 10 days of preparation, collection, collation and analysis of information and report writing. Details of the in-country itinerary, including field visits, and stakeholders met are provided in **Annex 2**.

The approach was based on the Terms of Reference in **Annex 1**. It included:

- desk review of project documents and relevant related literature (**Annex 3**);
- interviews with major stakeholders, including Project donors, implementing partners and Steering Group members, government officials including parliamentarians, and local community representatives of Jamoats³; and
- field visits to the 4 Jamoats, in which lie the 3 Project demonstration PAs (Romit Zapovednik, Almosi Zakaznik and Shirkent Natural Historical Park⁴), to interview key stakeholders (Jamoat chairpersons, JRCs, community members) as well as PA managers. There was only time to visit inside one of the PAs, Shirkent, where the most part of a day was spent walking up a dried river bed to see the dinosaur footprints, the original *raison d'être* for the establishment of this PA.

The use of questionnaires was limited to the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) for PAs, which were completed under the supervision of the PMU at the beginning and end of the Project. These scorecards were then examined by the Evaluation Team in the case of the 3 demonstration PAs, as well as other PAs showing declines or exceptional increases in management effectiveness over the Project period.

The evaluation was undertaken in as participatory a manner as possible in order to build consensus on achievements, short-comings and lessons learnt. Interviews with stakeholders were conducted informally, with the help of an interpreter as necessary. Interviews focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the Project and how things might be done differently in future (lessons learned). Evidence was cross-checked (triangulation) between as many different sources as possible to confirm its veracity.

Opportunities were taken to acknowledge, challenge and encourage the Project Management Unit (PMU) and partners in an open, objective manner on the basis of preliminary findings from Project reports and interviews, before committing these to paper. Initial findings were shared with the PMU and partners at a meeting on 10th November 2011. These focused on the extent to which outcomes and outputs in the logical framework had been achieved, followed by a brief assessment of strengths, constraints, opportunities and lessons learnt. The proceedings of the meeting, list of participants and their positive feedback are reported in **Annex 4**.

The scope and structure of the evaluation, as specified in the ToR (**Annex 1**), includes the following key aspects.

- **Project design** and its relevance to:
 - a) *Development priorities* at national level.
 - b) *Stakeholders* needs.
 - c) *Country ownership / drivenness* -among government, local authorities, public services, utilities, residents.
 - d) *UNDP's mission to promote sustainable human development (SHD)* through building capacities in the focal area of environmental protection and management.
- **Performance** relative to achievement of Project objective and outcomes, as determined by:

³ Jamoat is the local administrative body at sub-District (Rayon) level, comprising up to c. 16 villages.

⁴ Zapovednik is a Strict Nature Reserve, equivalent to Category Ia (Strict Nature Reserve) of the IUCN protected area management categories system. Zakaznik is a State Nature Reserve, equivalent to IUCN Category IV (Habitat/Species Management Area). Natural Historical Park is equivalent to IUCN Category II (National Park).

- a) *Effectiveness* in achieving objectives and desired outcomes, and overall contribution of the Project to national strategic objectives.
- b) *Efficiency* in terms of the different implementation modalities, cost effectiveness of use of GEF resources and actual co-financing for the achievement of project results.
- c) *Timeliness* of results.
- **Management arrangements** focused on Project implementation:
 - a) *General implementation and management* with respect to adequacy of the Project, implementation structure, including the effectiveness of the initial international NGO and subsequent UNDP Country Office execution, partnership strategy and stakeholder involvement.
 - b) *Financial accountability*, with particular reference to adequate reporting, identification of problems and adjustment of activities, budgets and inputs.
 - c) *Monitoring and evaluation system* and its adoption during implementation and internalization by competent authorities and service providers after Project completion, particularly with reference to performance indicators being **SMART**⁵.
- **Overall success** of the project with regard to the following criteria:
 - a) *Impact* of the results with respect to the development objectives of the Project and the achievement of global environmental goals, including positive or negative, intended or unintended changes brought about by the Project intervention.
 - b) *Global environmental benefits* with regard to conserving globally important biodiversity.
 - c) *Sustainability* of benefits/activities beyond the life of the Project, both static and dynamic.
 - d) *Contribution to capacity development* of target groups.
 - e) *Replication* to date, without direct intervention by Project, and potentially.
 - f) *Synergies* with other similar projects, funded by government or other donors.

In addition to a descriptive assessment, Project achievements (outputs and outcomes), sustainability of outcomes and its monitoring and evaluation system (design and application) were rated with respect to **either** the level of satisfaction achieved **or** the likelihood of various dimensions of the outcomes being sustainable at Project termination, as shown in **Table 1.1**. Three criteria (relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) were used, as appropriate, to evaluate the levels of achievement attained with respect to the Project objective and outcomes, in accordance with GEF requirements (GEF, 2008).

Table 1.1 Application of GEF minimum evaluation requirements^{6,7}

Minimum evaluation requirement	Dimension of evaluation	Basis of evaluation
Achievement of Project objective	▪ Outcomes	Level of satisfaction
	▪ Outputs	
Sustainability of Project outcomes	▪ Financial risks	Likelihood of risk
	▪ Socio-political risks	
	▪ Institutional framework/governance risks	
	▪ Environmental risks	
Monitoring & evaluation system	▪ Design of system	Level of satisfaction
	▪ Application of system	

Satisfaction scale: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory, Moderately Unsatisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Highly Unsatisfactory

Sustainability scale: Likely, Moderately Likely, Moderately Unlikely, Unlikely, Highly Unlikely

⁵ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (UNDP-GEF, 2011)

⁶ The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, 2006

⁷ Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations, 2008

The 6-point satisfaction and 5-point sustainability scales are defined in **Table 1.2** and **Table 1.3**, respectively. Thus, the Project objective and outcomes were rated in accordance with their respective measurable indicators (**Annex 8**), as well as for each of its components (**Annex 7**), using a 6-point scale that is defined in **Table 1.2**. Other aspects of the Project's objective (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impacts) and sustainability of its outcomes were rated, respectively, according to satisfaction and sustainability scales, for which the results and justification are provided in **Table 3.7**.

Table 1.2 Definitions of levels of satisfaction (GEF, 2008 *Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations*)⁸

Rating	Definition
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
Satisfactory (S)	The project had minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The project had significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
Unsatisfactory (U)	The project had major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.
Highly Unsatisfactory (U)	The project had severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.

Sustainability of the Project's results required rating according to the likelihood of outcomes being sustainable at the Project's termination, based on a 4-point scale that is defined in **Table 1.3**. Evaluations were based on testing progress and achievements against five major criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results and sustainability, as appropriate), in accordance with GEF requirements.

Table 1.3 Definitions of levels of risk to sustainability of Project outcomes (*UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF-Financed Projects* GEF, 2012)

Rating	Definition
Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes expected to continue into the foreseeable future.
Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks , but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained.
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Substantial risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on.
Unlikely (U)	Severe risk that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained.
Highly Unlikely (HU)*	Expectation that few if any outputs or activities will continue after project closure.
Not Applicable (N/A)	
Unable to Assess (U/A)	

*Originally, only 4 levels of risk were used to rate sustainability (GEF, 2008) but this fifth level has been introduced recently (UNDP, 2012).

⁸ The ratings and their definitions provided in the ToR (Annex 1) differ somewhat from those provided in the 2008 *Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations*. The Evaluation Team was advised by the UNDP Evaluation Office to use the latter, in line with the new *UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF-Financed Projects*, 2012.

Particular consideration was given to how the recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation had been implemented and, also in line with the ToR, to assessing changes in development conditions, as reflected in stakeholder perceptions.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 PROJECT START AND DURATION

This UNDP/GEF medium-sized project entitled *Demonstrating new approaches to Protected Areas and Biodiversity Management in the Gissar Mountains as a model for strengthening the national Tajikistan Protected Areas System* was approved by GEF on 19 September 2005 and became fully operational as from 3 January 2006, with completion due in December 2010. The Project was subsequently extended by one year to December 2011, based on the advice of the Chief Technical Adviser who was recruited to the Project after the MTE in June 2008. Its total duration was 6 years.

The Project had a long gestation, the original proposal having been submitted to the UNDP Country Office in 1999 in response to a UNDP sponsored seminar in 1997 that called for proposals suitable for GEF funding. The original idea concerned small-scale tree planting (community forestry) which did not meet GEF criteria (see **Section 3.1.3**). However, the concept was redesigned and submitted to GEF, with a focus on strengthening the protection afforded to 3 PAs in the Gissar Mountains, by assisting the development of their management plans. The Project Development Framework (PDF A) was submitted to the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordination Centre in September 2002, approved the following month and received delegation of authority on 15th April 2003. However, priorities for GEF and Tajikistan had changed during this period from being focused on individual PAs to the entire system of PAs. Thus, the Project was re-aligned to reflect this change in emphasis and submitted to the GEF Secretariat in June 2005 under Operational Programme 4 on Mountain Ecosystems, as part of Strategic Priority BD1 of the GEF Business Plan:

“The key objective of this priority is to conserve biodiversity through the expansion, consolidation, and rationalization of national PA systems. Its operational focus will be flexible and be based on a thorough understanding of key strengths and weaknesses at the system and national institutional levels, and on how any given individual intervention contributes towards long-term sustainability within a PA systems context.”⁹

It was resubmitted in September 2005, following revision in line with review comments by the GEF Secretariat in mid-June 2005, and finally approved by GEF on 19 September 2005. This lengthy preparatory phase of 6+ years had significant consequences on the overall outcome of the Project, first identified in the MTE and considered further in **Section 3.1.2**.

2.2 PROBLEMS THAT THE PROJECT SEEKS TO ADDRESS

The Project Document presents a convincing case for influencing the emergence of a new system of nationally protected areas in Tajikistan, as the Republic has been engaged in the creation of legal and institutional foundations for a democratic political system and market-based economy since its independence from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) in 1991 and the end of its civil war in 1997. Biodiversity conservation is very much part of this agenda, marked by the completion of a national Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan in 2003.

Tajikistan's PAs system covers approximately 21%¹⁰ of its territory (143,100 km²), much of it a legacy of the FSU that comprised a network of *zapovedniks* (strictly protected reserves maintained in their wild condition and used only for scientific research and education) and *zakazniks* (reserves managed for the conservation of particular biodiversity features, such as populations of rare plants or colonies of birds, where temporary or permanent restrictions may be

⁹ GEF/C.21/Inf.11 April 17th, 2003.

¹⁰ According to Tajikistan's 2003 Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, there were 4 *zapovedniks* (1,744 km²), 2 national parks (26,036 km²) and 13 *zakazniks* (3,134 km²).

imposed upon certain economic activities, such as logging, mining, grazing, hunting, etc). This legacy exists on paper, however, with all PAs exposed to ineffective forms of management and unsustainable management of their biodiversity. The main barriers identified in the Project Document include: fragmented institutional and management responsibilities, severe cuts in funding (leading to reduced capacity and losses in qualified staff), weak and inconsistent policy and legislation, inadequate information and monitoring, and lack of mechanisms for participation, benefit sharing and conflict resolution with local communities.

Thus, the Project seeks to address these barriers and, thereby, strengthen the foundations of Tajikistan's PAs system by piloting integrated, holistic management that is based on sound information and involves the participation of local communities within a selection of sites representative of the Republic's main types of PAs (i.e. *zapovednik*, national park and *zakaznik*).

The Gissar Mountains was selected as the focal area for the Project (**Figure 2.1**), due to its significant global biodiversity values and the relatively close proximity of the 3 chosen demonstration PAs (Romit Zapovednik, Almosi Zakaznik and Shirkent Natural Historical Park) to the capital, Dushanbe (**Figure 2.2**). The Project area, covering some 6,075 km² within Tursunzade, Shahrinav, Gissar and Vahdat districts (listed in order from west to east), is located on the south side of the Gissar range, delineated by the crest of the range to the north, the Kofarnihon River to the east and south, and the border with Uzbekistan to the west. Other important factors influencing the selection of these PAs were: the interest and commitment of the main stakeholders in the Project area, including the NGOs who originally proposed the Project; and the fact that the threats and barriers to the effective functioning of these sites were common to the entire PAs system. Thus, they provided an outstanding opportunity for developing models and best practices for subsequent replication across the rest of the PAs system.

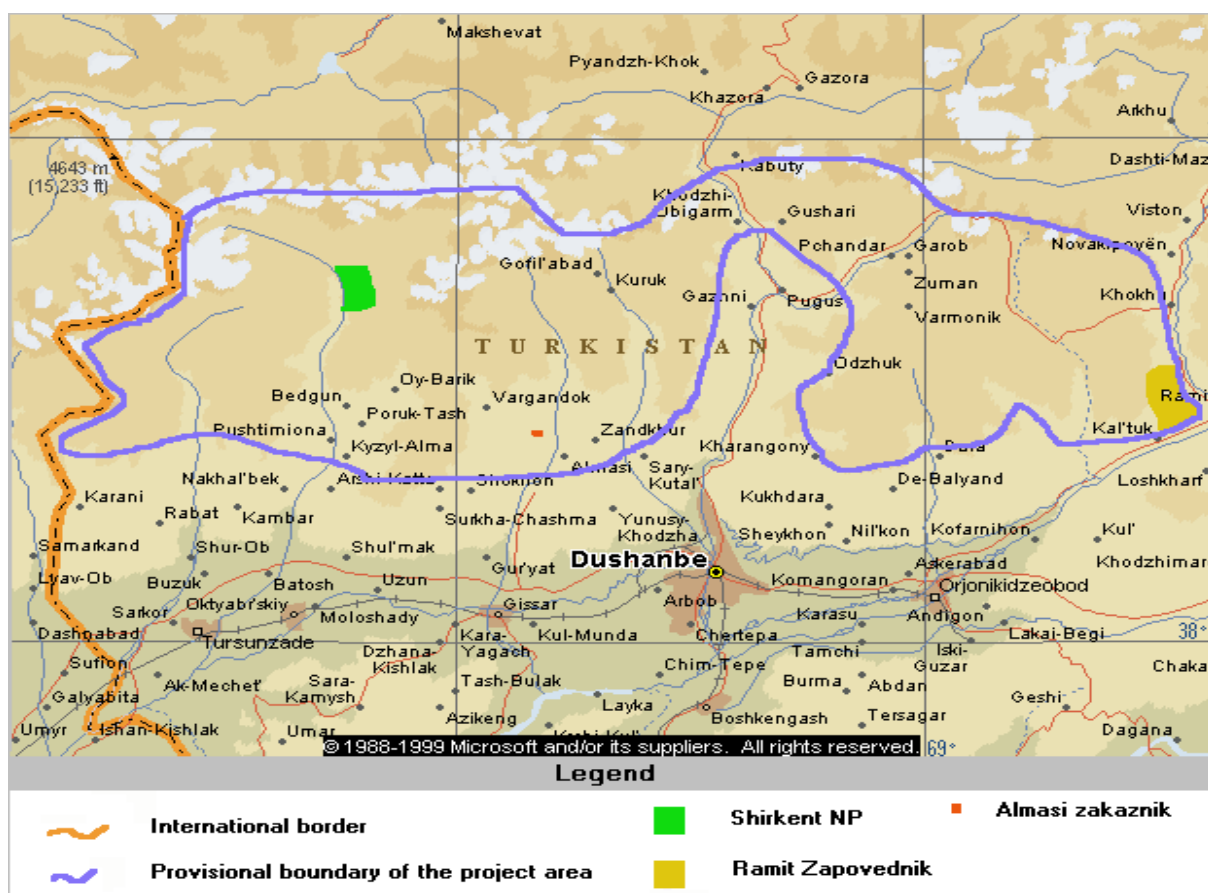


Figure 2.1 Location of Project area, which encompasses the southern watershed of the Gissar Mountains.

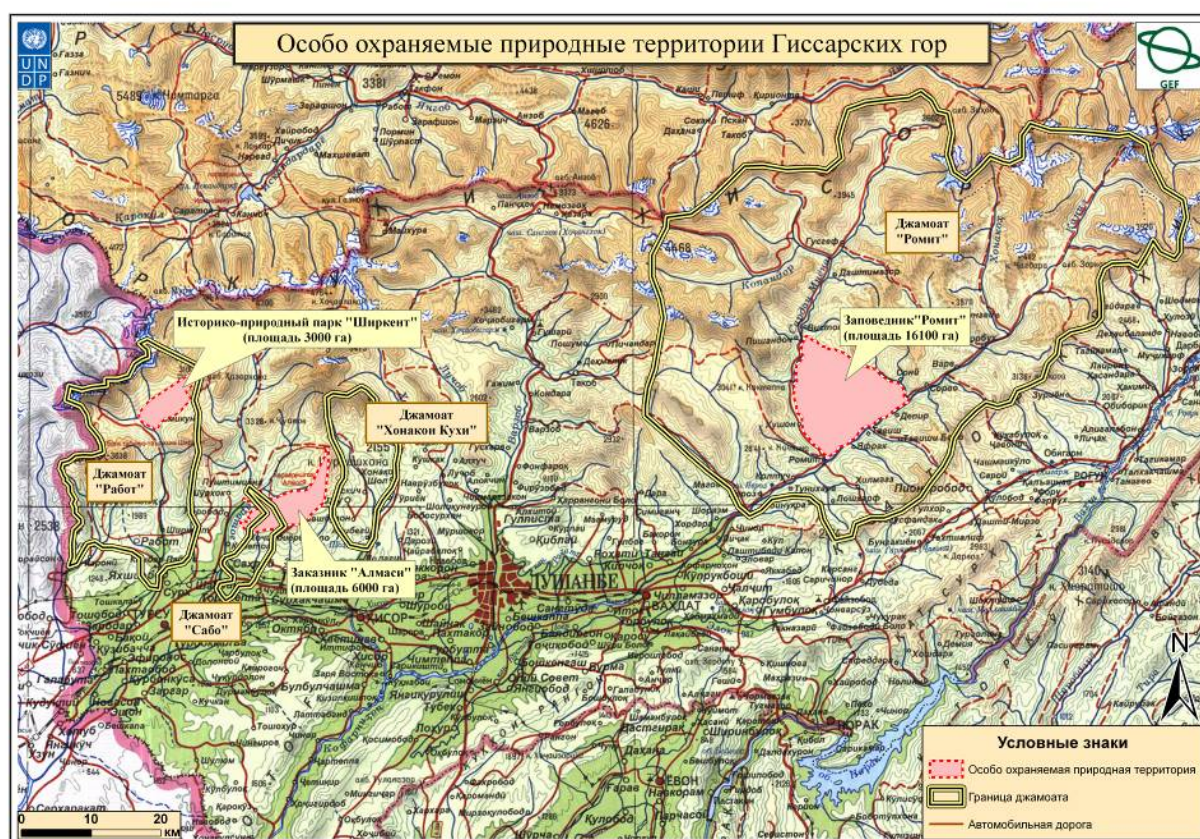


Figure 2.2 Location of 3 demonstration PAs (shaded pink), Romit Zapovednik, Almosi Zakaznik and Shirkent Natural Historical Park (east to west), within Project area

2.2.1 Biodiversity context

The Gissar Mountains form part of the Pamiro-Alay Mountains of Central Asia, located within the dry continental subtropical bio-climatic zone of west Tajikistan and south-east Uzbekistan. The Project area occupies some 6,075 km² on the southern slopes of the Gissar Mountains and comprises 4 distinct ecozones:

- permanent snow (around 5,000 m) with transition to alpine grassland;
- juniper (*Juniperus seravschanica*, *J. semiglobosa* and *J. sibirica*) forests (2,500-3,500 m);
- *Thuja orientalis* forests (600-2,500 m); and
- deciduous forests dominated by walnut (*Juglans regia*) or, along valley bottoms, by willow (*Salix* spp.) and poplar (*Populus* spp.).

The Project area falls within the Middle Asian Montane Steppe and Woodlands (Ecoregion No. 111), one of the Global 200 ecoregions¹¹ identified by WWF as a priority for conservation of all of the world's ecosystems, as well as those areas that contain exceptional concentrations of species and endemics. It also lies within the Mountains of Central Asia, an area defined by Conservation International as one of 34 global biodiversity hotspots¹².

¹¹ The analysis actually yielded 238 ecoregions which, effectively conserved, would safeguard the most outstanding and representative habitats for biodiversity on the planet. This set of ecoregions is referred to as the Global 200 (Olson, D.M. and E. Dinerstein, 2002. The Global 200: Priority Ecoregions for Global Conservation. *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* 89: 199–224).

¹² Mittermeier, R.A., Gil, P.R., Hoffman, M., Pilgrim, J., Brooks, T., Mittermeier, C.G., Lamoreux, J. and da Fonseca, G.A.B (2005). *Hotspots revisited: Earth's biologically richest and most threatened terrestrial ecoregions*. Conservation International, Washington D.C. 392 pp.

According to the Project Document, over 2,000 plant species, 3,000 invertebrate species and 221 vertebrate species (40 mammal, 150 bird, 21 reptile, 2 amphibian and 8 fish species) have been recorded within the Gissar Mountains, significant numbers of which are endemic and a few listed by IUCN as globally threatened¹³. The area has also been identified as an important centre for agrobiodiversity, originally by Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov in the early 20th century, and is well known for its wild species of fruits, nuts and onions.

More recently, since the onset of the Project, an analysis of the distribution and conservation status of 1,486 species of endemic and sub-endemic vascular plants in Tajikistan has shown that endemics are the most numerous in the Gissar-Darvasian geo-botanical region, corresponding to the Gissar Mountains, and the Zeravshan region immediately to the north¹⁴. Habitats harbouring highest numbers of endemics are steppes and semi-savannas, alpine forests, xerothermophilous shrubs, alpine meadows and swards at altitudes around 1800, 2000 and 2500 m. The main threat to these endemic species was identified as intensive grazing, leading to erosion of soils and denudation of habitats. Many more of these endemic species are considered to be threatened than are presently recorded in the *IUCN Red List*.

The fauna of the Gissar Mountains comprises Indo-Himalayan and Mediterranean elements, as well as tertiary relicts and endemics of Gissaro-Darvaz origin. This particular mountain range is an evolutionary meeting place, with taxa from various regions overlapping in their distributions. The area contains biodiversity of undoubted global value, including endemic, rare or endangered species, such as the snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*), a flagship species. Fossil dinosaur footprints exposed in Shirkent Natural Historical Park also feature in this area.

2.2.2 Social and political context

The main threats to this globally important biodiversity identified in the Project Document relate to unsustainable use of natural resources by the local communities, specifically:

- (i) overgrazing of fragile mountain slopes and pastures;
- (ii) unsustainable hunting and harvesting of wild fauna and flora (hay, nuts, fruits, medicinal plants); and
- (iii) unsustainable logging for fuel wood and construction materials.

The root causes to such threats are attributed to the Soviet era when traditional land use practices, tenure systems and population dispersal patterns, developed over centuries of experience, were disrupted abruptly and replaced by intensive agriculture and mining of fossil fuels within a political system of collectivization and centralized management that also brought social development benefits such as health care and subsidies from other parts of the Union. This led to a very rapid growth in population, from 2.9 million in 1970 to 6.1 million in 2000¹⁵, which could no longer be sustained by the system. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and resulting removal of subsidies and disintegration of state support services and institutional capacities, all of which was exacerbated by civil war, natural resources rapidly became over-utilised.

During the Soviet era efforts to conserve biodiversity focused on the establishment of a PA system, comprising *zapovedniks*, *zakazniks* and, latterly, national parks, equating approximately to IUCN PA management categories I, VI (or III) and II, respectively¹⁶. This system had its limitations with respect to such principles as coverage, ecological integrity and equality of access

¹³ Details can be found in Annex 6 of the Project Document.

¹⁴ Arkadiusz Nowak, Sylwia Nowak and Marcin Nobis (2011). Distribution patterns, ecological characteristic and conservation status of endemic plants of Tadzhikistan – A global hotspot of diversity. *Journal for Nature Conservation* 19: 296– 305.

¹⁵ *Human Development Report*, 2000

¹⁶ Dudley, N. (Editor) (2008). *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. x + 86 pp.

to resources but it did achieve its purpose of conserving significant biodiversity, a reflection of the power of the Soviet state. With the collapse of strict control and emergence of new political and social conditions from the embers of the civil war, there is a major, challenging opportunity to realign the philosophy and design of Tajikistan's PA system, based on current understanding of biodiversity conservation science and best practice in its application.

This is the development context within which the Project has been designed, with the intention of addressing the 3 main barriers and threats to the effective functioning of PAs, namely: inadequate legal and policy instruments, lack of institutional capacity and pressures on biodiversity from neighbouring communities.

2.3 IMMEDIATE AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The **goal** (development objective) of the Project, as originally defined in the Project Document, is: to catalyze the improved conservation of globally significant biodiversity in Tajikistan through the demonstration of new mechanisms and approaches to effective management of protected areas and natural resources adjacent to them.

The **objective** towards achieving this goal is:

to strengthen management effectiveness and sustainability of three protected areas of different types on the southern slopes of the Gissar Mountains, thereby to provide models and best practices replicable throughout the national PA system.

In order to achieve this objective, the Project focussed on addressing current weaknesses and gaps in the baseline conditions by focussing on policy reform, effective management of PAs and the development of sustainable and/or alternative livelihoods for communities living in close proximity to PAs (**Section 2.6**).

In order to address threats and their root causes to globally significant biodiversity in Tajikistan through demonstrating effective management of PAs and the surrounding natural resources, These 3 components of the Project were defined by a set of Outcomes and respective Outputs, as shown in **Table 2.1**. The Outputs were designed to address the following specific barriers identified in the Project Document:

- Limited integration or coordination between PA management and peripheral rural natural resource management.
- Inadequate core funding from Central Government.
- Inadequate capacity, particularly in relation to technical and managerial skills among staff.
- Management planning does not address long-term objectives for PAs, informed by sound understanding and application of the science and modern management principles.
- Lack of infrastructural and technical resources within PAs.
- Wider natural resource use issues including: outdated enabling legislation for conservation and sustainable use; and limited capacity and lack of governance models among agencies responsible for agriculture and forestry and among local government administrations.

Following the MTE, the Project design was reviewed by the newly appointed CTA with respect to Outcomes and Outputs and a series of activities necessary to deliver each Output was identified. No changes were made to Outcomes or Outputs with the exception of Output 1.3, which was cancelled. It was considered to be a hang over from an earlier draft of the original Project Document and, in fact, is partly covered in the management planning of the three demonstration PAs (Shirkent, Almosi and Romit) under Outcome 2 (Output 2.2).

Table 2.1 Project outcomes and their respective outputs, as specified in the Project Document

Project Outcomes	Project Outputs
Outcome 1: Strengthened environmental governance provides a more sustainable land-use context for the PA system.	Output 1.1 Legal and policy framework for PA management and enforcement is strengthened.
	Output 1.2 Overall regulatory framework and enabling environment for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resources use in and around PAs is strengthened and/or clarified.
	Output 1.3 Participatory land use and natural resource management plans developed and piloted in the PAs and their buffer zones. ¹⁷
Outcome 2: New management practices are introduced and capacity built in target PAs; overall management effectiveness and sustainability of the PA system substantively improved.	Output 2.1 Technical knowledge and management capacity of the PA staff is improved.
	Output 2.2 Field conservation capacity of the PAs is strengthened.
	Output 2.3 Sustainable financing mechanisms in place for the three PAs.
	Output 2.4 Networking and exchange of best practices throughout the PA system is established; replication of lessons generated by the project is ensured.
Outcome 3: Practical examples for stakeholders of how to achieve environmentally sustainable livelihoods around target PAs.	Output 3.1 Pilot sustainable natural resource use options for reducing socio-economic pressures on natural resources in and around PAs demonstrated and long term support to sustainable development facilitated.
	Output 3.2 Alternative options for producing and conserving energy are demonstrated helping to reduce use of fuel wood.
	Output 3.3: Dissemination of lessons learned to relevant government authorities, NGOs, communities and development agencies and facilitation of follow up initiatives.

2.4 MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

The primary stakeholders, in terms of those who potentially have the most to benefit from the Project, are the Republic of Tajikistan's Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP) and its State Agency for Protected Areas, colloquially and somewhat misleadingly known as Tajik National Park. They are the client and, together with the 3 demonstration PAs, the focus of Project support under Outcomes 1 and 2 (Table 2.1).

Table 2.2 Range of stakeholders benefitting from the Project in relation to demonstration PAs and their respective districts and jamoats

Protected area [primary stakeholder]	District [secondary stakeholder]	Jamoat [primary stakeholder]
Shirkent Natural Historical Park	Tursunzade	Rabot
Almosi Zakaznik	Shahrinav	Sabo
	Gissar	Khonakoi Kuhi
Romit Zapovednik	Vahdat	Romit

¹⁷ Output 1.3 was dropped following the MTE, based on the recommendations of the CTA (1st Mission Report).

The local communities within the 4 jamoats located in close proximity to the 3 demonstration sites, as listed (**Table 2.2**), are also primary stakeholders, as they stand to benefit directly from Project support under Outcome 3 through improved or alternative livelihood opportunities.

Secondary stakeholders include the many parts of government, NGOs and donors who have a vested interest in the Project's successful delivery because this will contribute to their respective programmes and implementation of policies, with little or no investment on their part. They include: the 4 districts within which are located the 3 demonstration PAs (**Table 2.2**), the State Agency of Forestry and Hunting and its local leskhoz (forest) administrations (forest management), National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre (biodiversity protection), Ministry of Agriculture (grazing management), Tourism Agency (ecotourism development), Ministry of Health (community health provisions) and Parliament (legislation); NGOs such as Youth of the 21st Century and Fauna & Flora International; and donors such as GIZ, FAO and the Swiss Central Asia Mountain Programme.

Other stakeholders include research institutions (Academy of Sciences, universities), private sector, associations (hunters, fisherman) and the wider public, especially visitors. UNDP Country Office and UNDP/GEF Regional Centre for Europe and CIS (Bratislava) are also stakeholders, with respect to the design and implementation of the Project, as is the GEF Secretariat to whom this Terminal Evaluation report will be submitted.

3. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS¹⁸

3.1 PROJECT FORMULATION

3.1.1 *Implementation approach**

Implementation approach is rated as UNSATISFACTORY with respect to Project formulation, on the basis that the rationale was flawed. The decision to appoint an Executing Agency with no remit or experience in biodiversity conservation and PAs management exposed the Project to unnecessarily high risks of technically weak implementation.

The overall strategy planned for implementing the Project, as set out in the Project Document, is rational and follows a reasonable approach. Project management, support and extension staff was designed to be provided by CARE International, with scientific and technical work contracted out to national and international consultants as appropriate.

The design of the implementation approach was flawed in one crucial respect and that concerned the selection of the executing agency, CARE International, which is an international humanitarian NGO dedicated to overcoming poverty. Clearly, this decision was taken after due consideration of the organisation's strengths with respect to its in-house knowledge and experience in sustainable livelihoods, ongoing operations in the Project area and, no doubt, its co-financing which was originally budgeted at US\$ 300,000. Its lack of institutional knowledge and experience in biodiversity conservation and, especially, protected areas planning, management and legislation was recognised during the implementation of PDF-A. As these technical inputs amounted to just 20% of the budget, the decision to proceed with CARE International is justified in the Project Document on the basis being addressed by hiring a suitably qualified International Project Director, supported by other international and national experts as required¹⁹. However, this justification is undermined by the weak ToR developed in the Project Document (Part IV) for the International Project Director, specifying a post-graduate qualification in a directly related field (e.g. natural resource management or biodiversity conservation) and experience in PAs. The importance of management planning is not specified as a necessary qualification.

The fact that the goal of the Project was globally significant biodiversity conservation and its objective was to demonstrate the effective management of PAs to conserve this biodiversity, as well as the sustainable management of surrounding natural resources, clearly indicates that the priority should have been to identify and select an executing agency experienced in biodiversity conservation and PAs management and then, if necessary, sub-contract the sustainable livelihoods component to an organisation such as CARE International through its local branch in Tajikistan.

There is no evidence to suggest that other options were fully explored. For example, in the absence of identifying a suitable organisation in country, it should have been possible to secure the services of biodiversity conservation NGO (international or national) operating in a nearby Central or South Asian country. The fall-back option would have been to internalise the execution

¹⁸ The ToR specifies certain aspects of the Project, all of which are covered in this section of the Terminal Evaluation Report, which require rating. The relevant subsections are marked by an asterisk and the rating and its justification are provided immediately at the beginning of the subsection, followed by the evidence.

¹⁹ The GEF Secretariat MSP Agreement Review of 14 June 2005, based on MSP proposal dated 1 June 2005, notes that: *CARE will be the lead executing agency but due to their lack of expertise in key aspects of the project, a substantial part of the execution will be subcontracted out to an "internationally recognized specialist organization". In addition, other aspects of the project will also be subcontracted to individual international specialists. This will likely hamper project sustainability.* Interestingly, there is no further reference in the subsequent, revised MSP proposal (15 August 2005) to subcontracting key aspects of the Project to an internationally recognised specialist organisation. This confirms that the lack of technical competence with CARE was recognised at all levels of the project formulation process but inadequately addressed.

and for UNDP to set its own Project Management Unit (PMU) from the outset, rather than half-way through the Project as subsequently proved necessary. At the very least, UNDP's oversight (monitoring) of the Executing Agency's implementation of the Project should have kicked in well before the MTE, beginning ahead of CARE International's appointment of an unsuitably qualified and experienced Project Director managing the Project remotely from overseas (Ukraine).

3.1.2 Analysis of Logical Framework

The Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) in Annex 1 of the Project Document is reasonably clear and sound in outline, with respect to Goal, Objective and Outcomes, but weak with respect to the relatively large number (26 for 1 Objective and 3 Outcomes) and SMARTness of its performance indicators (as defined in Section 1.2).

The main shortcoming in the overall framework stems from the change in both GEF and Tajikistan government priorities during the initial formulation of the Project in 2002-03, from a being focused on individual PAs to the entire PAs system. As noted in the MTE, the late bolt-on of the system-wide approach to the Project remains evident in the LFM and, arguably, this may have been at least partly responsible for the huge emphasis on management planning in the 3 demonstration PAs during 2006-08 to the detriment of the PAs system and its managers. This could have addressed simply by inverting the emphasis in the Project Objective from 'strengthening management effectiveness and sustainability of 3 PAs . . .' to 'strengthening the effectiveness and sustainability of the national PA system by demonstrating best practices in management in 3 different types of PA . . .', as suggested in the MTE (paragraph 57).

With respect to the performance indicators²⁰, which ideally should number no more than 3-4 per Outcome, a few examples will suffice to illustrate some of the numerous weaknesses:

- Inclusion of indicators for use beyond the life of the Project and, therefore, irrelevant for Terminal Evaluation purposes (e.g. 'more effective PAs in Tajikistan by year 10').
- Unqualified and/or unquantified indicators, such as 'clear models and best practices for the adaptation and establishment of sustainable PAs' and 'PA law strengthened'.
- Targets which are inconsistent with indicators, such as the target for 'adequate sustainable financing in accordance with management requirements' being specified in terms of an 'agreed financing plan, with defined needs, responsibilities, sources and institutional mechanisms.' The acid test, surely, is whether or not an adequate budget was actually made available to the PA manager? The plans and mechanisms may be in place but did they deliver an adequate budget?

3.1.3 Country ownership

The Project was conceived, promoted and driven by stakeholders within the Republic of Tajikistan. The original concept was submitted by NGOs that were concerned about the erosion of the ecological basis of local community livelihoods and the state of PAs within the Gissar Mountains. The NGOs, The Association of Forests and Wildlife Protection, the Child Ecological Society "Zumrad", the Youth Ecological Center, the Central Asia Regional Environment Center (CAREC), and the Civil Initiatives Supporting Foundation, subsequently secured support from the five rayon authorities, the national PA system administration, *leskhoz* administrations and a large number of village councils. The Tajik Research Institute on Nature Management and Forestry has supported the local NGOs throughout this effort.

The Project reflects Tajikistan's national priorities in conservation and development. The Gissar Mountains is a priority area for nature conservation and sustainable development. Tajikistan's National 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper', a government-wide approach to reduce endemic poverty supported by ADB and World Bank, has highlighted this Project as a priority action for the

²⁰ Note that the further development of the LFM, with respect to the addition of key species indicators, during the Project Inception phase was misguided (**Section 3.2.2**).

near term, which is an almost unique example of early government recognition of the link between environment and poverty. This bodes well for longer term mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource use in the Republic.

The Project represents a continuation of UNDP's work with government on the development and adoption of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity²¹, developed with UNDP/GEF assistance. It will be an on the ground application of the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for the Gissar Mountains Region. The Project also responds to the Government of Tajikistan's National Plan of Action, by developing the capacity of local institutions and communities to address the effects of climate change at the community level, and national priorities specifically indicated in the State Environmental Program 1998-2008 (Government Resolution #449, 7 August 1997). Further details of these policy drivers can be found in the Project Document.

3.1.4 Stakeholder participation*

Stakeholder participation is rated as SATISFACTORY, with respect to Project formulation, on the basis that a wide range of governmental, non-governmental and community-based organisations have been involved in Project from the outset of its design and subsequently during the preparation of the PDF-A, including its LFM.

The main stakeholders are outlined in **Section 1.7**. They were involved throughout the design and development of the Project, including the 6 preliminary assessments undertaken by consultants as part of PDF-A to define the baseline conditions. These reports covered: i) socio-economic conditions and use of natural resources; ii) land-use, legislation and policy; iii) institutional framework and state statistics; iv) zoology; v) flora; and vi) forestry. Over 30 interviews with government agencies (national, regional, local), NGOs, foreign assistance programmes, research institutions and private enterprises were undertaken during the preparation of PDF-A, helping also to identify potential partners. Some 50 stakeholders were also consulted on the design of the Project and its LFM at a workshop (19-20 November 2002). Further details are provided in the Project Document.

It is also important to record that the idea for this Project originated from 4 NGOs (Association of Forests and Wildlife Protection, Child Ecological Society *Zumrad*, the Youth Ecological Centre, and the Civil Initiatives Supporting Foundation) in response to a 1997 UNDP seminar to solicit GEF proposals (**Section 2.1**). Their concerns about the erosion of natural resources, upon which local livelihoods are dependent, and the state of PAs within the Gissar Mountains were supported by the Tajik Research Institute on Nature Management and Forestry, as well as the Central Asia Regional Environment Centre. Working together, these NGOs secured the support of the respective rayon authorities, Tajik National Park authority, *leskhoz* administrations, and a large number of village councils.²²

3.1.5 Replication approach and cost effectiveness

Replication is central to achieving the overall objective of the Project in respect of Outcomes 2 and 3 in particular. Outcome 2 is focused on demonstrating effective management planning in the 3 target PAs, in order that the experience and best practices may be replicated across the PAs system. Likewise, the piloting of a wide range of approaches to developing sustainable livelihoods in areas peripheral to PAs under Outcome 3 is intended to encourage other community members to follow suit. Thus, there is considerable expectation for replication beyond

²¹ Safarov, Neimatullo, *et al.* (2003). *National Strategy and Action Plan on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity*. Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan.

²² Interestingly, none of the original 4 NGOs still existed by the time the Project had been completed and certainly none was mentioned in the MTE. Many NGOs emerged soon after the civil war ended, in some case supported from overseas, and not all survived. Also, these 4 NGOs were based in Dushanbe, whereas the Project focused on working with local NGOs close to target sites.

the life of the Project, as well as during Project implementation. This is very much part of the maximising the Project's cost effectiveness, with Project benefits ultimately impacting the entire PAs system.

A consistent weakness in such an approach is the relatively short timeframe of projects, so that any delays in developing models and best practices limits opportunities for replication within the life of the project, which may well have a knock on effect. This was certainly evident in the present Project, as reported in **Section 3.3.1**.

3.1.6 UNDP comparative advantage

UNDP Tajikistan is well respected by the government, having developed a close working relationship ever since Former Soviet Union times. Thus, it has a long track record of project implementation and execution, including previous assistance to the CEP in the development of a National Environmental Action Plan.

UNDP's portfolio of GEF work in Tajikistan is considerable, as well as elsewhere in the region. Details of these are given in the Project Document.

Although not anticipated at the time of the project's formulation, UNDP's experience and capacity in promoting development with rural Tajikistan programme through its network of JRCs probably saved the Project from disaster, following CARE International's withdrawal from operating in the country. UNDP was quickly able to establish new JRCs in each of the 4 jamoats within the Project area.

3.1.7 Linkages between Project and other interventions within the sector, including management arrangements

The Project is aligned with the 2005-2009 UNDP Country Programme for Tajikistan, for which the stated outcome in this sector is "Natural resources sustainably managed and fewer persons killed, injured, made homeless, or affected by disasters." The components of this Country Programme have direct linkages with the Project, specifically: transforming livelihoods through poverty alleviation; redistributing responsibilities to strengthen local governance; and overcoming mountains with respect to natural disaster mitigation. UNDP's biggest initiative, Communities Programme, includes the enhancement of opportunities for community participation in local development planning and the implementation of local development projects. It was anticipated that experience from the Communities Programme would be extremely valuable to the Gissar Mountains Project in respect of bring about more sustainable approaches to natural resource use and achieving sustainable livelihoods.

Linkages between the project and other interventions in the sector identified during the during the Project's design include: the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, completed in 2003; a biodiversity MSP implemented by the World Bank in Dashti Djum that focuses on PA management planning and sustainable financing; the establishment of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve as a model for conservation in Uzbekistan (UNDP) and the World Bank Transboundary Biodiversity Project for the Western Tien Shan (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan).

Management arrangements

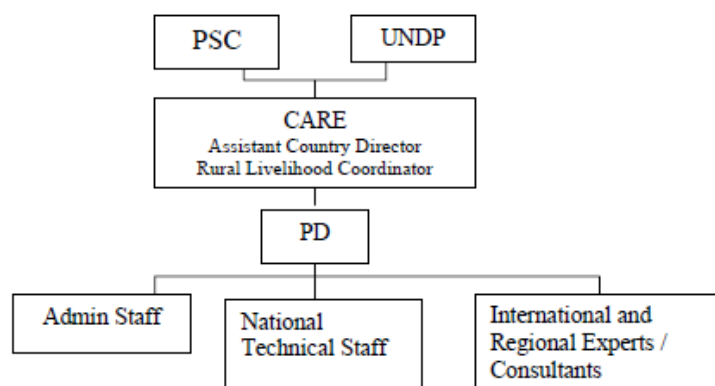
As planned in the Project Document, implementation of the Project was assigned to the UNDP Country Office in Tajikistan. Its supporting role was specified as including:

- management oversight (project launch, participation in steering committee meetings, monitoring implementation of annual and quarterly work plans, field visits, financial management and accountability, annual audit, budget revisions, etc.);
- ensuring reporting and independent evaluation is undertaken;

- assisting with identification and recruitment of project personnel and subcontractors as required; and
- assisting with procurement of goods and supplies as required.

CARE Tajikistan was selected as the executing agency under the UNDP NGO Execution Modality, in accordance with standard UNDP rules and procedures and with the agreement and support of the National Coordinating Agency, the Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP).

CARE was selected on account of its institutional capacity to meet UNDP execution requirements and its practical experience of implementing projects in the field in Tajikistan. Its overall responsibility for day-to-day management of Project activities and the timely and verifiable attainment of Project outputs, outcomes and objectives included: recruiting and contracting of Project personnel and consultant services, procurement of equipment, managing resources (staff, subcontractors and budgets), and reporting (technical and financial). CARE recruited an International Project Director to oversee Project execution and coordinate implementation with partners, supported by an Assistant Project Director (responsible for administration and financial management) and a team of Project staff and technical experts (international and national consultants). The Project management structure, as shown in the Project Document, is reproduced below.



The Committee for Environment Protection was designated the National Coordinating Agency. It was responsible for setting up a Project Steering Committee, chaired by the Director of the Forestry and Hunting Agency. The role of the Steering Committee was to monitor, evaluate and oversee the Project's implementation, including approval of the annual work plans and financial reports. It met 6 times during the life of the Project. Steering Committee members included the Director of the State Agency for Protected Areas and representatives of other governmental agencies, UNDP CO, scientific institutions and environmental NGOs. A list of members is provided in **Annex 5**.

Subsequently, in response to the *Marginally Unsatisfactory* rating awarded to the Project by the MTE in June 2008 and the closure of CARE International's operations in Tajikistan later that year, execution was transferred to UNDP CO using the Direct Execution (DEX) modality.

Having taken on the additional responsibility of Project execution, UNDP established a new Project Management Unit (PMU) and, from November 2008, hired a Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) to provide technical oversight of Project implementation. UNDP CO also provided core funds via its TRAC scheme and, in 2009²³, secured a one-year no-cost extension in order to provide the additional resources and time necessary to complete implementation of the Project and meet its objectives. Most of the Project's activities were completed by November 2011,

²³ See 2009 APR/PIR under Rating of Project Progress in Implementation (RTA comments).

providing the opportunity to assess the final status of outputs within the timeframe of the Terminal Evaluation.

3.2 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

3.2.1 *Logical framework used during implementation as a management and M&E tool*

The LFM, as originally specified in the Project Document (Annex 1) underwent significant changes at various times during implementation:

- The original LFM was revised during the inception phase of the Project (February - April 2006) to develop more quantitative indicators based on key animal and plant species in the 3 PAs, as well as to establish baseline METT scores for Almosi and the remaining 17 PAs. The MTE considered this to have been misguided and a significant waste of resources, involving a team of 23 scientist, because the key indicator species were not directly related to the Project development objective and the survey methods were in some cases flawed (e.g. quadrats fenced and, therefore, immune from the impacts of Project interventions, quadrats unwittingly located outside PA boundaries). This revised LFM, with 3 Outcomes, 10 Outputs, and 25 indicators, is presented in the Inception Report and provided the basis for evaluating progress in achieving successful outcomes in the MTE.
- Further changes were made to the LFM by the CTA in November 2008, following concerns identified in the MTE about Project priorities needing to be clarified and the relevance of the key indicator species and robustness of survey methodologies selected. Although some weaknesses remain in the design of the logframe, this second revision resulted in indicators being reduced to a more manageable number (17). This LFM, updated in 2011, has been used as the basis for this Terminal Evaluation (**Annex 8**).

Inevitably, such changes introduce inconsistencies, which to an extent limited the value of the LFM for monitoring achievements. However, such revisions do clearly indicate that the indicators have been used and honed for monitoring purposes. It is also important to highlight the regular application of the METT tool as a means of verifying and monitoring improvements in effective management of the entire PAs system, not only the 3 demonstration PAs.

Good use has been made of the LFM for monitoring progress in achieving the development objective. Baselines and targets were described and/or quantified during Project's formulation, except in the case of the indicator species that were quantified in the second half of 2006 but later removed from the LFM in 2008. Evidence from the APR/PIRs (2007 – 2010) indicates that development objective targets have been monitored regularly, annually in most cases and in 2006 (Project onset), 2008 (MTE stage), 2010 and 2011 (Project end) in the case of METT scores for the entire PAs system.

3.2.2 *Effective partnerships arrangements established for implementation of the Project*

Strategic and practical partnerships does not feature significantly in the MTE, suggesting that close working relations with key partners and other stakeholders to help deliver Project outputs had not been established to any great extent. Certainly relations with certain key, influential individuals in government had been problematic, as noted in the MTE and in APR/PIRs, and progress on the ground with village communities was slow.

However, it is clear post-MTE that PMU developed good, close relationships with many of its key stakeholders, resulting in some very effective formal and informal partnerships. These include inter-ministerial working groups to address new legislation, resulting from PMU's close collaborative working with Chairman of the Committee on Legislation & Human Rights; cementing a strong bond between PAs and respective JRCs, enabling local communities to become involved in the management planning process; and bringing the MLF into partnership with JCRs

to help promote its micro-loans. These and other examples are considered in further detail in **Section 3.3.1**.

3.2.3 Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management

There is little or no evidence of any adaptive management being driven by feedback from the monitoring processes in place prior to the MTE. There were no adjustments to the Project strategy reported in the 2007 APR/PIR, except to revisions of some indicators in the LFM. This is in spite of a net loss of US\$ 0.25 million of co-financing arising from the long gap between the approval of the PDF-A in 2003 and the approval of the MSP in 2005.

Clear evidence of adaptive management follows in the wake of recommendations from the MTE, beginning with the 2008 APR/PIR which documents decisive actions to address the *Marginally Unsatisfactory* progress in implementation, notably recruitment of a CTA and handover of Project execution from CARE International to UNDP Tajikistan. Thereafter, the monitoring processes are seen to be more dynamically applied, with good evidence of strategic interventions and lateral thinking to address obstacles, all of which is informed by the mission reports of the CTA that track implementation of and changes to Activities under their respective Outputs in the annual Technical Work Plan. In the 2009 APR/PIR, for example: the lack of progress with Outcome 1 (changes in legislation) was identified as a critical risk and management responses were identified; and some activities were rationalised due to budget and time constraints while, at the same time, UNDP Tajikistan increased its co-financing from US\$ 0.13 million to 0.33 million that year to counter the loss of US\$ 0.3 million originally committed by CARE International. Also, the Project was granted a no-cost extension of 1 year.

A. Financial planning and management

The total budget in the Project Document was US\$ 1,745,000, of which US\$ 1.0 million (57%) was grant-aided by GEF (including US\$ 25,000 for PDF A) and US\$ 745,000 (43%) co-financed by bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, and national and international NGOs. Co-financing included US\$ 295,000 committed by CARE Tajikistan and a cash grant of US\$ 140,000 by UNDP Tajikistan. Details of the co-financing sources are shown in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1 Sources and amounts of co-financing pledged at the time of approval of PDF-A (2003), as indicated in the Project Document approved in 2005.

Cofinancing (US \$) Type/Source	Implementing Agency		Government		Other Sources*		Total Financing		Total Disbursements	
	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual
Grant	140,000	795,000			455,000	110,000	595,000	905,000		1,753,622
Credits							0	0		
Loans							0	0		
Equity							0	0		
In-kind			150,000	60,000			0	0		60,000
Non-grant Instruments*							0	0		
Other Types							0	0		
TOTAL	140,000	795,000	150,000	60,000	455,000	110,000	595,000	905,000		1,813,622

* Other Sources refer to contributions mobilized for the Project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, private sector etc.

By the time the Project Document was approved, however, co-financing from these 'other sources' (CARE Tajikistan, World Food Programme, FAO, Central Asia Mountain Programme, Women and Development NGO) was no longer available, amounting to a shortfall of some US\$ 460,000. This loss was somewhat offset by additionally funds (US\$ 116,211) being sourced from the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Tajik Aluminium Plant and Community Connections.

More detailed annual budgets and disbursements are shown in **Tables 3.2** and **3.3**. In reality, the anticipated budget deficit accruing from the unexpected shortfalls in co-financing was picked up by UNDP Tajikistan using Target for Resource Assignments from the Core (TRAC) funds. Their original grant of US\$ 140,000 (**Table 3.1**) was raised repeatedly and ended up being US\$ 795,000 (**Table 3.3**), which amounts to 45% of the donors' budget (i.e. GEF and UNDP). This is very impressive in terms of leverage of funds from a GEF perspective, quite apart from demonstrating a huge level of commitment by the Implementing Agency, UNDP.

Table 3.2 Annual budgets, including cash and in-kind co-financing

Project 1786 (PIMS)	Total 2006-2011	Annual Budgets (US \$)					
Donor		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
GEF Contribution	1,111,942	172,057	250,735	283,237	128,674	121,231	156,007
UNDP (TRAC)	803,276	0	63,996	35,000	330,000	270,000	104,280
Total	1,915,218	172,057	314,731	318,237	458,674	391,231	260,287
Cash co-financing – partner managed							
FAO	40,000						
CARE	300,000						
CAMP	20,000						
WFP	50,000						
Gender for Development	50,000						
US Fish & Wildlife Service	40,641						
Tajik Aluminium Plant	1,900						
Community Connections	73,670						
Total	576,211	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
In-kind co-financing							
Government	110,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	20,000	20,000	40,000
UNDP	30,000						
GTZ	2,500						
Total	142,500	10,000	10,000	10,000	20,000	20,000	40,000

Table 3.3 Annual disbursements, including cash and in-kind co-financing

Project 1786 (PIMS)	Total 2006-2011	Annual Disbursements (US \$)					
Donor		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
GEF Contribution	975,000	98,760	224,407	281,435	128,198	86,193	156,007
UNDP (TRAC)	794,686	0	63,551	26,378	331,301	269,176	104,280
Total	1,769,686	98,760	287,958	307,812	459,499	355,369	260,287
Cash co-financing – partner managed							
FAO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CARE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CAMP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WFP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gender for Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
US Fish & Wildlife Service	40,641	0	40,000	0	0	0	0
Tajik Aluminium Plant	1,900		1,900				

Community Connections	73,670	0	70,000	0	0	0	0
Total	116,211	0	116,211	0	0	0	0
In-kind co-financing							
Government	110,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	20,000	20,000	40,000
UNDP	30,000	0	0	0	0	30,000	0
GTZ	2,500	0	0	0	0	2,500	0
Total	142,500	10,000	10,000	10,000	20,000	52,500	40,000

Annual budgets and disbursements in **Tables 3.2** and **3.3**, respectively, show that the majority of funds had been disbursed by the end of 2009. Annual budgets allocations are fairly typical of a normal project cycle, with a lower allocation in the first year while the Project got up to speed, establishing the necessary infrastructure, contracting staff and consultants etc, followed by several years of higher investments and declining in the final years (**Table 3.2**). There do not appear to be any major discrepancies between annual budgets and annual disbursements, except in the first year (2006) when only 57% of the budget was dispersed (**Table 3.3**).

Financial planning and management appears to have been rigorous not only with respect to the overall budget but also at Project Outcome level. There is a consistent level of investment in each of the Outcomes throughout the Project period, albeit with more emphasis on Outcome 1 in the first year (2006) and a concerted higher level of investment in Outcome 3 in 2009, following the MTE (**Figure 3.1**). This agrees well with our understanding of Project implementation and its adaptive management to address challenges, especially mid-term.

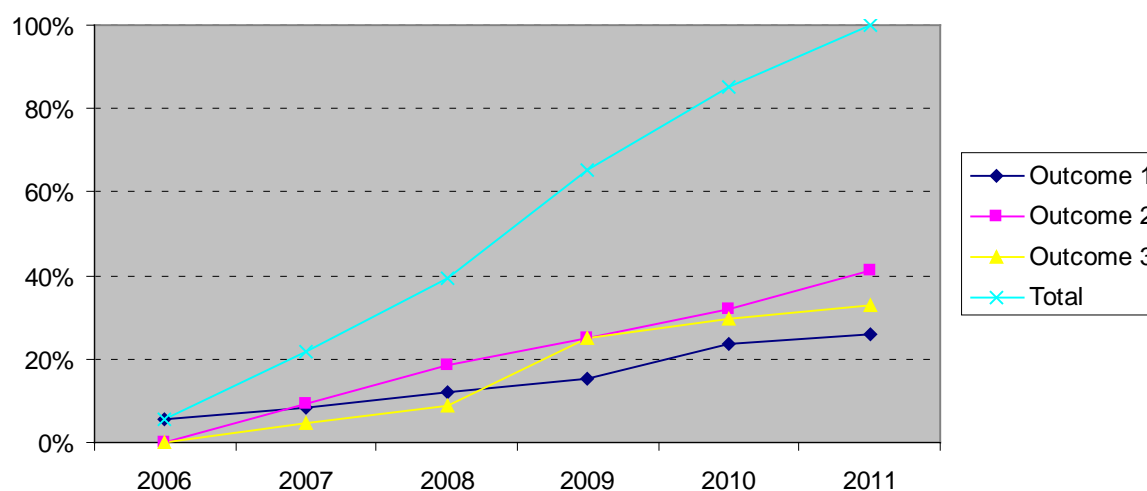


Figure 3.1 Cumulative annual disbursements, expressed as a percentage of the total Project expenditure (US\$ 1,769,686), plotted according to Project Outcome

Finally, it should be noted that 78% of GEF resources (US\$ 975,000) were invested in Outcomes 1 and 2, which focus on legal and management provisions for conserving biodiversity, while the greatest proportion (47%) of UNDP resources were invested in sustainable livelihoods under Outcome 3 (**Table 3.4**). This is very much in line with GEF policy and priorities, while also demonstrating the strength of its partnership with UNDP in enabling both biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods to be addressed in an integrated and holistic manner.

Table 3.4 Levels of investment in Outcomes 1-3, shown as percentages of the total funds dispersed, as well as percentages of GEF and UNDP TRAC funds, respectively.

Outcome	Total disbursement	GEF			UNDP		
		disbursement	% total disbursement	% GEF disbursement	disbursement	% total disbursement	% UNDP disbursement
Outcome 1	461,533	306,133	17%	31%	155,400	9%	20%
Outcome 2	727,679	460,237	26%	47%	267,442	15%	34%
Outcome 3	580,473	208,630	12%	21%	371,843	21%	47%
Total	1,769,686	975,000	55%	100%	794,686	45%	100%

B. Monitoring and evaluation: design and implementation*

Monitoring and evaluation is rated as SATISFACTORY, with respect to Project implementation, on the basis that the monitoring and evaluation plan was routinely applied in a consistent and comprehensive manner throughout the Project's duration. The process of using the METT to track improvements in PA management is considered to have been particularly valuable, as a means of exposing managers to the value of monitoring as well as generating a common understanding among their staff of priorities to address.

The main weaknesses concerned (i) the use and analysis of monitoring results to adapt and refine the implementation approach; and (ii) the design of the plan, particularly with respect to the SMARTness of the indicators in the LFM.

The monitoring and evaluation plan outlined in the Project Document is based around establishing an information baseline on biodiversity condition and ecosystem health (including socio-economic surveys of local communities) within the first year, which is then monitored in subsequent years by means of APRs/PIRs and implementation milestones in accordance with GEF and UNDP protocols. The plan includes annual meetings among key Project staff to review operations and re-assess priorities for implementation. It includes use of METT for monitoring PAs, bimonthly reporting to UNDP CO and CEP, quarterly reporting to the GEF Regional Coordination Unit and annual reporting in the form of combined Annual Project Reviews (APRs) and Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) that assess performance and progress towards achievement of Project outputs. Project achievements are monitored via indicators in the LFM. A Steering Committee assesses progress against planned outputs, provides strategic direction on implementation of the Project and facilitates necessary inter-agency coordination. The entire Project is subject to independent evaluation mid-term and towards its completion. External financial audit is undertaken in accordance with established UNDP procedures

Much of this plan was implemented, as already described and reviewed in the MTE (paras 23-27). Principal shortfalls identified in the MTE were considered to be:

- Lack of clarity due to reporting on activities by Outcomes rather than individual Outputs.
- Lack of detailed analysis of the challenges (problems, threats, risks) and no attempt to assess the quality of the work done by consultants.
- Lack of systematic impact monitoring, due in part to (i) weaknesses in the choice and application of the LFM indicators and, specifically, (ii) the absence of any comprehensive re-assessment of METT scores for all PAs to inform the MTE about progress achieved to date towards meeting the Project's objective.

Particularly significant was the application of the METT to track changes in effectiveness of PA management among the demonstration sites and other PAs within the national system. This will have exposed most PA managers to principles of effective management for the first time.

Most significant, however, was the MTE which surprised and challenged many partners and stakeholders, not least the Implementing Agency. Its credibility arose from its independence, technical competency, objectivity and transparency and led to a rapid, positive response from UNDP CO with respect to following up on the issues that needed to be addressed if the Project was to have a chance of being redeemed. The fact that the Project overall has shifted from *Marginally Unsatisfactory* mid-term to *Satisfactory* by the end of its term is firm evidence of monitoring and evaluation processes having been used successfully!

C. UNDP and Executing Agency execution*, coordination and operational issues

Implementation approach is rated as SATISFACTORY, with respect to Project implementation, on the basis that the strategic decisions and decisive actions taken in response to the MTE secured a reprieve for a Project that had meandered off-course and was unlikely to meet many of its targets. The previous *Marginally Unsatisfactory* MTE rating, based on strategically poor and technically unsound implementation, has been overcome by the huge improvement in relevant technical competence of the CTA and PMU, strategic focus on the Project objective, and delivery of most outputs. The main short-coming is that many outputs have been delivered at or towards the end of the Project, with little or no opportunity to replicate the experience during the life of the Project for the benefit of Tajikistan's PAs system as a whole and the livelihoods of those Tajikistanis living in the vicinity of globally significant and protected biodiversity. Management planning is among the exceptions (see **Section 3.3.1**).

The design of the implementation approach was flawed with respect to the criteria used for the selection and appointment of the Executing Agency, as discussed in **Section 3.1.1**. The repercussions of selecting an humanitarian organisation, CARE International, to execute a biodiversity conservation project became evident during the MTE when it became clear that the Project was "strategically off-course and of low technical quality"²⁴. The MTE focussed particularly on Outcome 2 because Outcome 1 had been largely successful and Outcome 3, albeit important, would make little difference to the overall Outcome of the Project if Outcome 2 failed. A number of key shortcomings were identified, resulting in the Project's implementation being rated as *marginally unsatisfactory* in the MTE:

- Overall lack of technical competence in not realigning the Project from its original focus on developing management plans for 3 PAs to strengthening management planning across the entire PAs system, using the 3 PAs to demonstrate how best to plan management and replicate this best practice across the rest of the system.
- Weaknesses and absence of clear rationale remaining in the logframe, despite re-designing it in the first few months of Project implementation.
- Inadequate technical ability and leadership in management planning, reflected in the recruitment of an International Project Director having expertise in environmental policy and management. This gap in management planning was finally filled by a volunteer, a retired employee of the US Fish & Wildlife Service, which is a totally inappropriate way of addressing an issue that is so fundamental to the successful outcome of the Project.
- The relocation of International Project Director from Tajikistan to overseas (Ukraine) in August 2006, who thereafter directed the project remotely by email, skype and telephone, visiting the Project for fortnightly intervals every quarter. The MTE's observation of a poor PMU commanding little respect from stakeholders is unsurprising, given this background.
- Poor support and, apparently, stalling of the Project for reasons of personal gain by the original National Project Coordinator, also General Director of Tajik National Park²⁵.

²⁴ Final Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation Mission, 2008 (p. 19, para 52)

²⁵ Fortunately, the situation improved in January 2008 with the reorganisation for the Ministry of Agriculture, Environmental Protection & Forestry and establishment of the Committee for Environmental Protection.

- Poor Project oversight by the Implementing Agency and limited strategic guidance by the Project Steering Committee, with little or no evidence of reports produced by the PMU on the good progress achieved being challenged.

Additionally, the Inception Report is not fit for purpose in that it does not provide a plan of how the Project will be implemented in accordance with the Project Document nor details about any strategic approach. Other than revising the LFM and providing an annual work plan, it simply reports on progress during the inception phase.

The Implementing Agency faced a crisis and either it needed to close down the Project or rapidly enact a series of drastic measures, along the lines recommended by the MTE (**Annex 6**). To the credit of UNDP Tajikistan, the latter course was chosen and, fortuitously, this coincided with CARE International's closure of its operations in Tajikistan. Thus, Project execution was transferred from NGO to Direct Execution (DEX) modality by UNDP²⁶, a PA management specialist with Central Asian experience was recruited as Chief Technical Adviser and a new PMU was created by UNDP, all of which was in place by November 2008.

Thereafter, implementation progressed increasingly effectively and was consistently reported by the National Project Coordinator, UNDP CO and RTA in the annual PIRs as *Marginally Satisfactory* in 2009 and *Satisfactory* in 2010. Key initiatives and mechanisms introduced by UNDP and its PMU that contributed to effective implementation include the following:

- **Outcome 1** Creation of an inter-ministerial working group, facilitated by a Member of Parliament (Chairman of the Committee on Legislation and Human Rights), to bring in the relevant legal and technical expertise and fast-track the process of drafting new legislation.
- **Outcome 2** Development of a common understanding and vision of Tajikistan's PAs, of which a minimum standard framework for management plans formed an important part.
- **Outcome 3** Establishment of Resource Centres (JRCs)²⁷ within each of the 4 jamoats in which the demonstration PAs were located.

Establishment of a micro-loan foundation, *Imdodi Rushd*, to resource livelihood enhancement and alternative activities under Outcome 3. Loans were delivered via JRCs.

Integration of improvements in energy efficiency with development of community-based approaches to tourism (ecotourism) through the construction of guest accommodation using low cost technologies in heat insulation and fuel efficient cooking/heating stoves.

The PMU, established in the wake of the MTE, comprises a small but very competent, dynamic and committed staff, well supported by the CTA and proven to be very effective in its delivery of outputs (see **Section 3.3.1**). UNDP also had the foresight to retain the former National Project Manager (a senior and well-respected forest engineer) as a consultant, thereby ensuring that historical knowledge about the Project and institutional relationships with key stakeholders were not jeopardised as a result of CARE International's exit.

One emerging issue that has also been consistently reported in the CTA's mission reports concerns UNDP staff essentially dedicated to projects being overstretched through having to undertake an ever increasing range of other tasks unrelated to their specific project duties, with the inevitable result that the quality and focus of their work diminishes. In the case of this Project, for example, PMU full-time staff in 2009 comprised 1 Project Manager, 2 technical staff and 1 Finance Assistant but by 2011 there were no full-time staff. The Project Manager is now managing an entire programme and 1 technical staff member is also responsible for several other projects, as well as having programme responsibilities. Lack of quality assurance is illustrated by

²⁶ The National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre was recommended in the MTE as the best suited agency for picking up execution of this Project but this was not supported by Government.

²⁷ JRCs are local non-governmental community-based organizations set up by UNDP throughout many parts of Tajikistan to promote community development and advocacy. Centres are basically equipped and staff are trained in project management, planning and accounting. Grants are allocated to establish revolving funds from which to dispense micro-loans to community members.

the fact that on two consecutive occasions the Evaluators were provided with copies of new legislation (2011 *Forest Code* and 2011 *Law on Specially Protected Natural Areas*), which subsequently proved to be final drafts that differed from the actual enacted legislation. To the Evaluators' minds, this is indicative of the high pressure under which staff work, to the extent that they do not have adequate time to double check prior to taking decisive action.

Doubtless, such pressures are a consequence of UNDP's hugely successful and developing programme in Tajikistan, for which the budget has grown from some US\$ 4.3 million in 2003 to over US\$ 40 million in 2010. Staff are increasingly managing large numbers of projects, with inadequate time to perform as well as they and their supervisors would wish unless they spend long hours in the evenings and weekends catching up, as is all too evident for anyone visiting the offices. This is a management issue that, unless addressed at an organisational level, will become more serious as programmes expand through their growing portfolios of projects. The Energy and Environment Programme for 2011-2015, budgeted at US\$ 10.71 million for example, is designed to provide a mix of policy advice, project development and implementation services, knowledge management and advocacy services through projects. In the Programme Document (draft July 2011) is proposed an organisational structure and management arrangements that provide a welcome attempt to respond to this evolving scenario, albeit does not specifically address management and staffing arrangements necessary at the project level.

3.3 PROJECT RESULTS

3.3.1 Overall results (attainment of objectives)*

The Project is evaluated as SATISFACTORY with respect to the overall achievement of its objective, based the above analysis and a more detailed evaluation of the LFM in which individual outcomes and outputs have been examined in relation to end of Project targets for performance indicators (see **Annex 8**). Ratings of other aspects of the Project's objective (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impacts) and sustainability of its outcomes are provided in **Table 3.7**, along with a brief justification.

The Project's objective, to strengthen management effectiveness and sustainability of three protected areas of different types on the southern slopes of the Gissar Mountains, thereby to provide models and best practices replicable throughout the national PA system, comprises three interrelated components: an appropriately supportive policy environment to enable management; capacity and capability to manage effectively and conserve biological diversity; and sustainable forms of land management practiced in areas surrounding PAs to safeguard their integrity.

An assessment of the extent to which these components have been addressed is provided below, based on Project Outputs and taking into account what was originally planned (Project Document), changes recommended in the MTE and further modifications advised by the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) and approved by the Steering Committee post mid-term to bring the Project back on course. Although not specified as a requirement in the ToR, Outputs have also been rated alongside their MTE ratings to show the improvements in the Project performance post MTE (**Table 3.5**). **This highlights the timeliness and value of the MTE and subsequent interventions, which 'saved' a project that was clearly heading for disaster.**

Table 3.5 Comparison of Mid-Term Evaluation and Terminal Evaluation ratings of Project Outputs

Outputs	Mid-Term Evaluation*						Terminal Evaluation*					
	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
Output 1.1 Legal and policy framework for PA management and enforcement is strengthened												
Output 1.2 Overall regulatory framework and enabling environment for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resources use in												

* HS = Highly Satisfactory; S = Satisfactory; MS = Marginally Satisfactory;
MU= Marginally Unsatisfactory; U = Unsatisfactory; HU = Highly Unsatisfactory

Output 1.1 *Legal and policy framework for PA management and enforcement is strengthened*

- 1993 *Forest Code* (revised version adopted on 2.08.2011); and
- 2002 *Protected Areas Law* replaced by the *Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on specially protected natural areas* (adopted on 26.12.2011).

- re-definition of PA designations, bringing them more closely in line with the IUCN categories system (Article 3);
- consideration of PAs in planning and development schemes (Article 11);
- provision of peripheral buffer zones to PAs in which certain activities are limited and others having negative impacts are prohibited (Article 14);
- provision for ecological corridors between PAs for migration and genetic exchange (Article 15) and protected landscapes (Article 16);
- access to PAs, with provisions for historical residents and ecotourism - importantly, revenue from tourism may be re-invested in the management of PAs (Article 18);
- provisions for management of zapovedniks (Article 22) and zakazniks (Article 28) with respect to management plans and the involvement of stakeholders in their formulation.

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- provisions for zoning national natural parks and controlling infrastructural development (roads, pipelines etc) within them (Article 29);
- provision for public (national significant) and private (locally significant) zakazniks, and their differentiation into types, such as landscape, biological, geological (Article 30); and
- provisions for designation of biosphere reserves (Article 45), trans-boundary PAs (Article 46) and wetlands of international importance and threatened species.

The legal and policy framework has been significantly strengthened as a result of this output, which is the culmination of good technical inputs, strong partnership working and persistence on the part of all concerned. Perhaps inevitably, therefore, some weaknesses, however, remain in the new PAs legislation that were known and not adequately addressed, for example:

- the inclusion of botanical gardens, zoological parks and, indeed, natural health resorts as categories of PA (Article 3), which is not consistent with the internationally accepted definition of a PA;

A protected area is: A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values²⁹.

- no significant change to participation of citizens in protection and use of PAs (Article 9) or provisions elsewhere than indicate the types of activities in which local communities may participate in protecting and conserving natural resources;
- no specific requirement for each PA to have a management plan (Articles 22 and 28 provide only for the authorisation of management plans); and
- strengthening of provisions for financing PAs (no significant changes to Article 12 on funding protection and use of PAs, also Article 32).

At the end of the day, however, a project can only provide technical assistance in helping to develop a competent piece of draft legislation and rest is up to lawyers and parliamentarians. Thus, it is the considered view of the Evaluators that this Output is a Highly Satisfactory result, given the context of existing PAs and related legislation within Tajikistan and the relatively short-frame in which these significant changes have been made.

Output 1.2 *Overall regulatory framework and enabling environment for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resources use in and around PAs is strengthened and/or clarified*

The new Forest Code, mentioned above, provides an overarching framework for conservation and sustainable management of forest biodiversity and other resources. It recognises the ecosystem services function of forests, provides for joint management of forests by the state and users, and permits funds from fee-based services and sales of forest products (including confiscated products) to be re-invested in forest management. The new Code is much more articulate, with terms clarified and, for example, new articles that specify types of forest lands and violations of the Code.

The Project also established a Working Group in April 2008 comprising six specialists from the from the Protected Areas Agency, Forestry and Hunting Agency and the Forest Institute, to develop subsidiary legislation for management of PAs and forests (i.e. normative legal acts, such as regulations, directions and instructions).

New pasture and hunting laws are currently being prepared, supported by GIZ and to a more limited extent by UNDP. Although not specifically part of this Project, they will contribute significantly to this Output over the longer term.

²⁹ Dudley, N. (Editor) (2008). *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. x + 86 pp.

Output 1.3 *Participatory land use and natural resource management plans developed and piloted in the PAs and their buffer zones*

Current local government sustainable land use practices were assessed by the Project in 2006 with respect to biodiversity conservation and use of natural resources in and around PAs³⁰. The goal of this assessment was to identify and promote a more integrated and environmentally sustainable regulatory framework for land management. It is considered in the MTE (page 15) to have fallen short of this goal due to inadequate interpretation of the results.

In 2007, the Project targeted the development of participatory land-use and natural resource management by commissioning a local NGO, *The Centre for Development*, to work with communities inside and adjacent to the target PAs, as well as with the local government representatives. Little had been achieved by the time of the MTE, due to initial delays in the selection process and the subsequent abnormally severe winter conditions in 2007/08. Further work on this Output was stopped in late 2008 on the advice of the CTA in order to focus efforts on delivering Outputs 1.1 and 1.2.

Outcome 2 *New management practices are introduced and capacity built in target PAs; overall management effectiveness and sustainability of the PA system substantively improved*

Output 2.1 *Technical knowledge and management capacity of the PA staff is improved*

This Output was based on: (i) attracting young specialists to work in the PA sector; and (ii) strengthening competence of current PA employees in contemporary conservation and management principles and practices through in-country training and overseas study tours.

- (i) Some 10 botany and zoology students from Tajik State University were involved in scientific surveys and research during the CARE era, a few of whom went on to undertake doctorates. However, the research programme was discontinued on the advice of the MTE and, as pointed out during the Terminal Evaluation, wages in the PAs sector are not attractive to students as they are lower than in the Academy of Sciences.
- (ii) Initially, during 2007, training focused on the importance of biodiversity conservation and its monitoring by means of indicator species. This was delivered to 96 employees of PAs and forestry units and 337 members of local communities through various seminars and trainings training sessions by scientists hired by the Project to develop a monitoring programme for its target PAs. Material on indicator species was also collated and presented as information sheets for distribution to local government agencies, schools and members of the public. Much of the scientific approach is reported in the MTE as seriously flawed, undermining the intention of building capacity among staff and raising awareness among the wider community.

A book was also produced and distributed to government agencies, universities and schools in 2008 to raise awareness about Tajikistan's PAs. While useful, it was assessed in the MTE as being of marginal value with respect to Output 2.1.

The following study tours were undertaken during the CARE era of the Project:

- 3-week tour to USA in July 2006 for 10 citizens from the Project target area to learn about nature-based tourism enterprises (PA concessions, gift shops, guesthouses, guiding and others) in small US communities located in/near protected or recreation areas. Tour was funded by the American Councils for International Education.
- In July 2007, US Embassy in Tajikistan funded 4 members of Ministry of Agriculture & Nature Protection to learn about USA's experience with CITES and how this has resulted

³⁰ *Narrative Report on the Local Government Sustainable Land-use Survey*

in longer term conservation planning of PAs and improved management of endangered species.

Overseas study tours were abandoned following the MTE, due to being deemed as relatively expensive, limited in outreach, and not readily applicable to the in-country situation. Instead, efforts were re-focused on in-country training, largely through developing a concept for Tajikistan's PAs system and a management planning framework. This worked well as a form of on-the-job training with tangible results, as reported below for Output 2.2.

Efforts post MTE were also made to develop a more systematic approach to training through development of a partnership with Fauna & Flora International, who had funds from the Darwin Initiative to develop a National Conservation Training Programme. This comprised a series of 6 training modules on biodiversity conservation related topics (ecosystem services, PAs management, biodiversity monitoring, sustainable livelihoods, forest management, project planning and management). Each module was delivered twice³¹, with up to 15 trainees per course (i.e. total capacity of 180 places, of which at least 125 were filled). Although courses were open to anyone able to cover their own costs, some of the modules were tailored to meet at least specific interests of the Project. Take up by the Project was very limited according to FFI, with only 8 persons from the 3 target PAs participating in 4 of the courses³². However, a few staff from the PAs Agency were also trained as trainers by FFI staff under this initiative.

Importantly, capacity was also developed in two other respects:

- among PA staff from 20 PAs through repeated application of the METT³³, raising their understanding about what constitutes effective management; and
- among the legislature, parliamentarians, President's Office and also the treasury, through working groups and other means of developing their understanding of PAs and how to sustain ecosystem services.

Output 2.2 *Field conservation capacity of the PAs is strengthened*

Activities identified in the Project Document for achieving this Output focus on: (i) establishing an adequate information base for systematic planning and decision making; (ii) setting up a long term monitoring and evaluation system, based on a robust data collection and GIS system (using where appropriate the WB/WWF METT); (iii) increasing community awareness and participation; (iv) rationalising PA boundaries and strengthening equipment and infrastructure; and (v) facilitating the drafting, approval and initial implementation of PA management plans for each of the 3 target PAs, thereby providing valuable models for replication throughout the PAs system.

The Project focussed most of its efforts on this aspect of the Project during the initial years (January 2006 to mid-2008). In so doing, the development of management plans became isolated from their intended broader role as tools to demonstrate capacity building throughout the PAs system. Furthermore, the technical quality of much of the work undertaken during that period was considered to be suspect. The level of achievement was assessed as **Unsatisfactory** in the MTE.

- (i) No substantive progress in developing a GIS-based information system had been achieved by mid-term, as reported in the MTE. Subsequent efforts focussed on developing a set of some 20 maps for the 3 demonstration PAs. Shape files exist for certain flora and fauna, tourism and various socio-economic information but there are no attribute data. Training manuals were produced for users of GIS and also GPS, and training workshop held for PA staff. However, the usefulness of this GIS is very limited as the focus has been on

³¹ 1st round of training was delivered in 2010 and early 2011, and the 2nd round from March 2011 to March 2012.

³² None of the training material was available for review at the time of the TE Mission.

³³ METT was used at the beginning and end of the Project for 20 PAs, and mid-term in the case of the target PAs.

developing products rather than the tool. Moreover, there is no one post-Project suitably trained to take responsibility for maintaining and developing the system.

- (ii) The long-term monitoring work was discontinued following the MTE as the methods were considered to be flawed and many of the selected indicator species of dubious value for management purposes. These were subsequently removed from the LFM on the advice of the CTA. Instead, the CTA proposed that a simple monitoring manual be developed for use by PA staff system wide³⁴.
- (iii) Awareness and community participation was delivered in a somewhat *ad hoc* manner up until the MTE, as illustrated by the earlier examples described above (Output 2.1). Subsequently, a more strategic approach was adopted, based around the establishment of Resource Centres in each of the 4 jamoats, a participatory management planning process and the hiring of an NGO, Youth of the 21st Century, to reach out to communities through the jamoats. This NGO also organised summer camps in Romit for children from each of the 4 jamoats.
- (iv) Significant progress has been made in rationalising PA boundaries. The area of Romit has increased from 16,100 ha to 16,139 ha due to changes in the river course along part of its boundary. It is also in the process of being established as a 74,800 ha biosphere reserve. Shirkent, which dwindled to 3,000 ha during the civil war, is in the process of being returned to its original area of 31,000 ha.

Infrastructural activities undertaken in response to a consultation survey with PA staff included: renovation of a former museum in Romit Zapovednik as a Training and Information Centre; refurbishment of an Ecological Information Centre in Almosi Zakaznik; and provisioning Shirkent Natural Historical Park with an office, Information Centre, and ecotourism/science room. Some equipment has also been provided, including transport (10 horses for the 3 PAs and a vehicle for Shirkent NHP).

- (v) Management planning commenced in October-November 2007 with the establishment of a government Working Group, comprising staff of the target PAs. The Project supported this Group at 5 public meetings, held in Dushanbe and 4 communities located close to the target PAs. They were attended by over 170 individuals (stakeholders). Despite these activities and the services of a retired US Fish & Wildlife Service volunteer, along with the numerous scientific surveys and research undertaken supposedly to inform management planning, little had been achieved by the time of the MTE.

Conscious of the need to precipitate the management planning process, while also ensuring that it built capacity among PAs staff, the CTA focussed efforts on defining a national PAs concept and a standard format for management plans, based on internationally accepted standards and local competences. With these tools under development, PMU established a multi-disciplinary Management Planning Team of 3 consultants who worked with the local communities, jamoats and PAs staff and facilitated the planning process. Management plans were produced for Almosi (approved 10.12.2010) and Shirkent (July 2011) but not Romit, which is due to be established as an UNESCO biosphere reserve³⁵. The management plan format is heralded a singular achievement by the CEP and its agencies (PAs and Forestry & Hunting) because it has transformed and unified management planning. The format, approved by the PAs Agency in June 2010, has been used as the basis to prepare management plans for other PAs, specifically Tajik

³⁴ Such a monitoring manual never subsequently materialised but monitoring requirements are covered in the new Management Plan format.

³⁵ Although there is no requirement for biosphere reserves to be legally designated as such under national legislation in order to become part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the Tajikistan Government has added biosphere reserve to its suite of PA designations in its 2011 *Law on specially protected natural areas*.

National Park (as part of the preparatory work for its nomination for World Heritage listing) and Tigris Balka Zapovednik (supported by WWF). Also, Dashti Djum Zapovednik is likely to have its management plan revised in line with the new format. Currently, it has a massive unimplemented plan, developed 7-8 years ago by a World Bank–GEF project. Management plans for the remaining 12 zapovedniks are due to be prepared using this model.

Output 2.3 *Sustainable financing mechanisms in place for the three PAs*

Recognising that sustainable financing for the 3 PAs cannot be achieved in isolation of reforming revenue generation for the entire PAs system, which is a huge challenge beyond the means of this Project, activities identified in the Project Document focus on: determining the required finances for the PAs themselves and central authority level, on the basis of initial assessment and management plans; identifying and agreeing institutional responsibilities and budgets for core management requirements; identifying the most viable revenue generation options to supplement state funding and address legal/regulatory barriers in this context; developing and piloting revenue generation options (trophy hunting, fees for tourism and natural resource use, etc) and institutional mechanisms for distribution and management of funds generated; and developing long-term financial planning.

Arguably, this is an ambitious set of activities even with the relevant policies and regulations in place to support sustainable financing. In the absence of an appropriate enabling environment and the necessary management plans until mid-2011, there was insufficient time in which to pilot any options. Recent provisions within the 2007 (#546) *Law on other types of the mandatory payments to the Budget* clearly state that all service fees, incomes and revenues accrue directly to the budget of the Forestry & Hunting Agency, of which 15% is transferred to the State budget. Cost from the damages goes to the forestry budget. Fines and compensation for violations also go to the state budget. The same provisions apply to PAs as at the time of Order 546 the two agencies were a single organisation. Thus, 85% of revenue generated from the proceeds of management activities and natural resources may be kept by the PA or Forest Unit and used in accordance with the management plan. This is a significant achievement in itself, even if no time remained to pilot it.

The other main activities initiated post-MTE were to review CEP's current approach to budgetary allocation for PAs, with a view to developing a more systematic approach, and to introduce financial planning to the management planning process. Technical assistance was provided to support PAs develop financial plans, based on the newly prepared management plans. One financial plan was prepared for Shirkent and training and guidance provided to staff from Almosi, which is more complicated by virtue of lying within 2 districts. The method is clearly documented and exemplified in the *Shirkent Natural Historical Park Financial Plan* (June 2011), and supported by an overall assessment provided in a separate report on *Financing of the Zapovedniks and National Parks System in Tajikistan*. The financial plan uses historical budgets and planned activities to project a 5-year budget, taking into account revenues from the State and income generated by the PA (e.g. sheep grazing, tourism)³⁶.

This grassroots initiative paves the way for an objective, bottom-up means of informing the State Agency for PAs and, in turn, the CEP of the budget necessary to deliver the management plan. The next vital step in the process is for the CEP to align its budget for PAs in accordance with the respective PA management/financial plans before submitting it to the Finance Ministry. This last step in the process has yet to be realised, as the latest (11/2011) budget submitted to the Treasury does not reflect budgets projected for the 3 demonstration PAs. There is now the opportunity, awareness, emerging competence and interest/commitment from PA managers and

³⁶ The Shirkent NHP Financial Plan shows a 21% financial deficit in the project budget for 2012-2015, a valuable demonstration in itself of the priority need to fully integrate planning, management and financing of PAs at system level in sustainable ways.

their staff to make this happen, given some further technical supervision and facilitation between PAs, PA Agency, CEP and the Finance Ministry.

Although the Project has achieved its performance indicator for financing PAs, with financing from the State budget having increased by 50% for the 3 demonstration PAs (**Annex 8**), this is fairly meaningless as the budgets are completely inadequate to manage PAs effectively, let alone attract a new generation of graduates to consider a career in PAs management. Furthermore, analysis of this indicator (*Financing of the Zapovedniks and National Parks System in Tajikistan* p. 3) shows that a 50% increase in the annual budget of a PA such as Almosi (US\$ 555) would have negligible impact if annual inflation (6%) and annual increments (20%) in staff salaries are taken into account. Inflation apart, the validity of an indicator set at a target that equates to an increase of 4.5 cents per hectare is verging on the ridiculous!

Output 2.4 *Networking and exchange of best practices throughout the PA system is established; replication of lessons generated by the project is ensured*

The lack of any activities in pursuit of this Output raised grave concerns about the Project's overall strategy in the MTE. Networking was identified as a challenge by the CTA, given the lack of effective means of inter-communication within the PAs system, and certainly the means of achieving this Output is only vaguely inferred in the Project Document, which refers to "targeted efforts . . . to effectively network with the wider PA system . . . and to ensure dissemination of key findings . . . and best practices and replicable model approaches/initiatives as well as follow up workshops/study visits with stakeholders to maximise practical transfer of knowledge gained."

Two initiatives to facilitate networking were taken post-MTE: the first being the publication of a regular Newsletter, *Navruzgoh*, for which CEP has taken ownership; and the second being a national staff conference that has been held annually since 2009. Both are reported to have been successful.

Replication of lessons has been limited, albeit with a few good examples, such as the use of inter-ministerial working groups to fast-track the changes in legislation needs to create the necessary enabling environment in support of Project interventions, and the application of the management plan format to other PAs. Interventions in other areas, especially with respect to Outcome 3, have been completed or consolidated only towards the end of the Project, leaving little or no opportunity for replication or, indeed, dissemination of best practice.

Outcome 3 *Practical examples for stakeholders of how to achieve environmentally sustainable livelihoods around target PAs*

Output 3.1 *Pilot environmentally sustainable income generation activities are introduced to demonstrate approaches and mechanisms for reducing socio-economic pressures on natural resources in and around PAs*

Demonstration activities identified in the Project Document were: (i) more sustainable approaches to livestock and pasture management; (ii) community and joint management forestry initiatives; (iii) community-based tourism; and (iv) other appropriate and viable natural resource management initiatives identified in partnership with local communities, such as bee keeping and small-scale agricultural schemes. Some of these activities were to be based on similar experiences gained in neighbouring countries and it was anticipated that they would be funded through micro-credit schemes.

A Household Baseline Survey was undertaken in 2006, judged as excellent in the MTE. This provided the basis for designing community development programmes. Two local NGOs were engaged in 2007: the *Centre for Development* to promote understanding of the importance of sustainable management in the surrounding environment for community well-being; and *Lochin* to support local communities in developing ecotourism. Little had been achieved by the time of the MTE, due to the lengthy selection process and subsequent severe winter conditions.

The CTA observed a lack of any overall strategic integrated approach, as well as a severe shortage of funds remaining in the budget for 2009 and 2010³⁷. The latter was partly addressed by an injection of TRAC funds by UNDP (see **Section 3.2.3A**). Given this context, remaining time constraints and UNDP's well-tried and tested approach to community development in Tajikistan through the establishment of Jamoat Resource Centres (JRCs), the following strategy was adopted for delivering Outcome 3:

- JRCs were established in each of the 4 jamoats in which the 3 demonstration PAs were located. They served as the main public institutions for delivering environmentally sustainable livelihoods within local communities, as well as a welcome interface between communities and the respective PA and its staff. Five-year strategies and financial plans were developed for each of the 4 target JRCs, thereby providing a mechanism for integrating activities and outputs under Outcome 3.
- A regional Micro-Loan Foundation (MLF) was established to cover the 4 targeted jamoats, with one staff member allocated to each JRC.
- Sustainable tourism activities were integrated with energy conservation initiatives, a particular focus being the development of guesthouses for tourists using energy efficient construction materials and appliances for heating and cooking. Community-based tourism and energy efficiency experts were hired to facilitate these initiatives.

This strategy proved to be very effective, enabling most of the performance indicator targets to be met (**Annex 8**). A summary of the numbers of households engaging in sustainable livelihood activities is given in **Table 3.6**.

The MLF has proved to be hugely successful, with approximately 1,500 clients (total population in the 4 jamoats is 92,000-93,000) since being set up in May 2009 with a total disbursement of US\$ 330,000 from the Project. Funds are made available for beekeeping, business enterprises, trade, agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry. It also has a charitable arm that had granted awards to 27 vulnerable families by March 2011. Defaulting on repayments is unbelievably low – 0%, attributed to the good consultation process during the negotiation of the loan.

Local people have been engaged in developing a community-based ecotourism plan, thereby promoting provision of energy efficient alternatives in households. Numbers of tourists are currently very low but, given the close proximity of these PAs to Dushanbe, tourism in this region can be expected to increase significantly during this decade.

The project has also supported the establishment of 4 nurseries (total area of 4.75 ha), one in each target jamoat. The largest comprises a 4 ha forest nursery in the territory of Tursun-zade District, where 240 kg of seeds were sown and 15,000 seedlings and saplings of different forest species were planted. Other initiatives receiving Project support include: establishment of a health centre in Shahrinav District (Almosi), provision of drinking water supplies, study tour to other JRCs in Soghd (northern Tajikistan) and hosting JRCs from Soghd and Kirgizstan to exchange experiences and transfer knowledge.

Table 3.6 Number of households engaging in alternative livelihood and energy efficiency activities, and in ecotourism initiatives

#	Jamoat	No. of households	Type of Activities	Status of household activities		
				Planned	On-going	Complete
Type and status of alternative livelihood activities - households						
1.	Romit	27	Beekeeping, pasture management, Joint forest management, ecotourism, pest and disease management, collection and processing medicinal and food plants, slope management,	0	3	24

³⁷ Approximately 73% of the GEF grant (US\$ 1 million) had been spent by the time UNDP took over Project execution from CARE International in October 2008.

			documentation of best practices, protected area management (hay making, visitor's rules). Environmental learning awareness trainings for school children.			
2.	Sabo	19	Beekeeping, pasture management, Joint forest management, ecotourism, pest and disease management, collection and processing medicinal and food plants, slope management, documentation of best practices, protected area management (hay making, visitor's rules). Environmental learning awareness trainings for school children.	0	1	18
3.	Khonakoi Kuhi	20	Beekeeping, pasture management, Joint forest management, ecotourism, pest and disease management, collection and processing medicinal and food plants, slope management, documentation of best practices, protected area management (hay making, visitor's rules). Environmental learning awareness trainings for school children.	0	1	19
4.	Rabot	23	Beekeeping, pasture management, Joint forest management, ecotourism, pest and disease management, collection and processing medicinal and food plants, slope management, documentation of best practices, protected area management (hay making, visitor's rules). Environmental learning awareness trainings for school children.	0	2	21
Totals		89		0	7	82
Type and status of improved energy efficiency activities - households						
5.	Romit	21	Energy efficient stove and kettle, housing insulation, thermal water heaters, improved ovens.	0	5	16
6.	Sabo	12	Energy efficient stove and kettle, housing insulation, thermal water heaters, improved ovens.	0	1	11
7.	Khonakoi Kuhi	15	Energy efficient stove and kettle, housing insulation, thermal water heaters, improved ovens.	0	2	13
8.	Rabot	16	Energy efficient stove and kettle, housing insulation, thermal water heaters, improved ovens.	0	2	14
Totals		64		0	10	54
Type and status of improved energy efficiency projects – guest houses (ecotourism)						
9.	Romit	2	Guest house with energy efficient stove and kettle, housing insulation, thermal water heaters, improved ovens.		1	*1
10.	Sabo	1	Guest house with energy efficient stove and kettle, housing insulation, thermal water heaters, improved ovens.			*1
11.	Khonakoi Kuhi	1	Guest house with energy efficient stove and kettle, housing insulation, thermal water heaters, improved ovens.			*1
12.	Rabot	1	Guest house with energy efficient stove and kettle, housing insulation, thermal water heaters, improved ovens.			*1
Totals		5		0	1	*4

*Guest house construction and energy efficiency improvements underway when visited in November 2011; due to be completed in the end of 2011.

Output 3.2 *Alternative options for producing and conserving energy are demonstrated helping to reduce use of fuel wood*

This Output was intended to build on existing achievements delivered by Asian Development Bank and Aga Khan Foundation experience in the Pamir Mountains of Tajikistan, focusing on more efficient use of fuelwood and dung, house insulation and feasibility of micro and pico hydropower generation. No significant progress had been made in any of these areas by the time of the MTE.

As explained above under Output 3.1, energy conservation initiatives were linked with the development of community-based ecotourism, with efforts focused on reducing fuelwood consumption. Demonstrations were supported in each target jamoat to show how guesthouses could be designed, constructed and equipped at low cost, using locally available insulation materials and fuel efficient stoves. Insulation of a guest room and installation of an energy efficient stove (for heating 1-3 rooms and cooking) costs about US\$ 1,000. Solar lighting costs a further US\$ 350.

Output 3.3 *Dissemination of lessons learned to relevant government authorities, NGOs, communities and development agencies and facilitation of follow up initiatives*

This Output focuses on developing practical (hands-on) guidance for replication of those sustainable rural development initiatives pilot by the Project that proved most successful. The Project Document refers to the production of such guidance being followed up by an action-oriented dissemination program, combining workshops, study tours, publication of practical manuals and mass media profile-raising. There is also reference to facilitating a dialogue between communities, NGOs, local authorities and development agencies in order to mobilise longer-term support for sustainable development initiatives initiated by the Project.

There has been limited opportunity to produce guidance on many of these initiatives as many were in the final stages of being piloted and completed at the time of carrying out this Terminal Evaluation. This situation is unsurprising, given the less than satisfactory status of the Project's implementation reported in the MTE that led to setting up a new PMU to realign priorities and re-focus on key deliverables.

This Output is reviewed in the Project's Exit Strategy and the CTA concludes as follows:

- UNDP's Climate Risk Management Project³⁸, which commenced in 2010 and received approval of its Inception report in November 2011, has already absorbed the limited number of lessons to be learnt and replicated using the JRC and MLF infrastructures set up by the present Project.
- It would be worth while and necessary to prepare a concise Project Lessons Learned Report, post Terminal Evaluation that covers all components of the Project (not just those under Outcome 3) for use by UNDP and others when undertaking similar activities in Tajikistan. Useful experience and lessons are identified as including:
 - How (and how not) to support legislation revision / development in Tajikistan.
 - Good (and bad) approaches / strategies for building state agency counterparts.
 - Key capacity limitations of state counterpart agencies in the environment field and means by which they can be addressed.
 - Good (and bad) practices for implementing projects effectively.
 - Good practices for building non-government capacity to further environmental aims in the field.
 - Best practices for addressing key rural land use and energy issues (forestry, grazing, fire wood demand etc).

In addition, the Evaluators wish to highlight the potential value of documenting the basis to the successes of the MLF and JRCs and the synergies gained from their strategic integration. These topics are developed further in Section 4.2.

3.3.2 *Relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency and sustainability**

³⁸ Climate Risk Management is a regional project with a small Tajik national component that concerns the development of agro-forestry as a cost-effective ecosystems-based approach to reducing natural disasters, caused by climate change, and increasing rural population resilience.

The Ratings of other aspects of the Project's objective (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impacts) and sustainability of its outcomes are provided in **Table 3.7**, along with a brief justification based on evidence outlined earlier in this evaluation report.

Table 3.7 Application of GEF evaluation criteria to Project objective and outcomes

GEF evaluation criteria	Terminal evaluation – summary comments and ranking
Achievement of Project objective:	To strengthen management effectiveness and sustainability of three protected areas of different types on the southern slopes of the Gissar Mountains, thereby to provide models and best practices replicable throughout the national PA system.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project design is in line with UN Convention on Biological Diversity objectives and the GEF Strategic Priority BD-1 to catalyse sustainability of PAs. It is highly relevant to social, economic and environment needs of local communities and Tajikistan as a country, and timely with respect to modernising the PAs system which is a legacy from the Former Soviet Union. The 3 components provide an integrated approach to strengthening management and sustainability of the PA system by addressing weaknesses in existing legislation, building competence in planning and management within PAs sector, and supporting development of more sustainable livelihoods among communities within PA environs. Thus, it is designed to meet needs and interests of relevant stakeholders. Main design weakness is lack of emphasis given to the PAs system as a whole, whereas Project originally designed with a focus on 3 PAs and subsequently not modified sufficiently in a holistic manner to accommodate changed GEF and national priorities. This has lead to confusion and difficulties in implementation. <p>Ranking: Satisfactory</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project has been effective in delivering much of Outcome 1 concerning regulatory environment for sustainable land-use with respect to the PAs system, which is a significant achievement. Delivery of Outcome 2 has seen significance progress in raising understanding and standards in PAs management and financial planning, including participatory processes to engage local communities and other stakeholders. Progress has been more limited with respect to raising competencies due to initial ad hoc implementation approach and subsequent lack of time and funds to consolidate and embed training programme across PAs sector. Effectiveness of Outcome 3 jeopardised by many outputs being delivered towards end of Project so little or no opportunity for consolidation and replication. However, the mechanisms identified and put in place to support and empower local communities (i.e. establishment of JRCs in combinations with MLF to provide micro-loans) proved extremely effective. <p>Ranking: Moderately Satisfactory</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, use of funds has not been as efficient as expected, largely due to incompetence in Project execution during first 2 years of implementation. This resulted in resources being used in less than expeditious ways (e.g. large investment in scientific research and surveys that had minimal bearing on informing management of the target PAs). Fortunately, this incompetence was identified and addressed through the MTE process and subsequent high degree of adaptive management. Project delivered latterly in cost effective manner, albeit the 1-year extension would not have been possible but for additional TRAC resources provided by UNDP Tajikistan. This was also necessary as much of the co-financing originally identified in the Project Document was seriously jeopardised: only 25% of the cash co-financing (US\$ 570,000) from CARE International and other international donors materialised due to the long delays between approval of the PDFA in April 2003 and the actual start of the Project in January 2006. Project implementation has been efficient, with regular reporting and attention to monitoring the LFM although earlier reporting pre-MTE appears to have glossed over the lack of direction and real progress in implementation. Partnership working has been good, during the latter half of the Project, enabling much more to have been achieved with the available human and financial resources than would otherwise have been possible. <p>Ranking: Moderately Satisfactory</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results/Impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project represents significant intervention and marks a watershed between Former Soviet Union approach to PAs for conserving biodiversity and current, internationally accepted principles and practices. It has laid some important foundations to the future management of Tajikistan's PAs system, much of which now requires consolidation and replication. These include new laws, more informed PA management and financial planning, and more sustainable working relationships between PAs and neighbouring communities that address biodiversity conservation and livelihood interests. (See Annex 8 for more detailed evaluation of Project objective, outcomes and outputs.) <p>Ranking: Satisfactory</p>
Sustainability of Project outcomes	<p>Outcome 1: Strengthened environmental governance provides a more sustainable land-use context for the PA system.</p> <p>Outcome 2: New management practices are introduced and capacity built in target PAs; overall management effectiveness and sustainability of the PA system</p>

GEF evaluation criteria	Terminal evaluation – summary comments and ranking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial resources ▪ Socio-political ▪ Institutional/governance ▪ Environmental 	<p style="text-align: center;">substantively improved.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Practical examples for stakeholders of how to achieve environmentally sustainable livelihoods around target PAs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There has been a noticeable improvement in current levels of financing PAs by the State, although this is inadequate for management purposes in the case of most PAs. Financial planning has been clearly demonstrated as a crucial part of management planning in 1 PA and its future replication is imperative to consolidating the approach and, importantly, making the case for securing adequate budgets from the Ministry Finance, via the CEP, in future. Currently, PA budgets are determined by means of a top down approach and bear no direct relation to management objectives at individual site level. Much closer rapport between CEP and the Ministry of Finance is necessary to ensure that the latter has a clearer understanding of the role of PAs with respect to its ecosystem services and other benefits. This will not happen overnight and it will require sustained effort and pressure over the next 5-year budget cycle to secure adequate State funding for Tajikistan's PAs system. Ranking: Moderately Likely ▪ Project has made a significant impact among the local communities through jamoats, reinforced by micro-loan opportunities established by the MLF and available via the JRCs. The MLF has been notably successful in establishing these revolving funds and there is every likelihood that this financing mechanism can be sustained in the future. Outreach work has also included participation of school children in environment conservation activities and distribution of information about safeguarding the environment among their family members and peers. Ranking: Likely ▪ Much of the Project's achievements have resulted from the strength of relationships between partners, notably between UNDP and the likes of CEP, Parliamentarians and jamoats, and mechanisms put in place to achieve objectives. The latter include the inter-ministerial working groups to draft new legislation, the JRCs and MLF with their environmental and sustainable livelihood agendas, and the newly adopted standards and best practice in PAs management and financial planning. These relationships, mechanisms and practices have grown from strength to strength and there is everything to suggest that they will outlive the project, develop further and become more widely applied. Ranking: Likely ▪ Clearly, the main thrust of the Project concerns reducing pressures on the natural environment and it is likely that the interventions of the Project can be sustained due to the improved legislation and management planning, enhanced competencies of PAs staff directly involved with the Project and greater awareness and support from local communities in and around the target PAs. However, current levels of intervention are not adequate to fully address pressures on the PAs as this will need a paradigm shift in funding levels and much more strengthening of capabilities of staff. One potential threat which could be exacerbated as a result of the Project is tourism if the current momentum towards ecotourism is not maintained and developed further. The Project has taken a community-based, environmentally friendly approach towards the development of tourism, which is entirely appropriate and to be applauded. However, this could easily be undermined if tourism were to develop rapidly within the country as whole, particularly as the target PAs are readily accessible from Dushanbe. It is easily to envisage a scenario in which less responsible operators and business entrepreneurs within the tourism industry respond to an influx in international tourism by investing in infrastructures (roads, hotels, shops, recreational facilities etc) that are inappropriate within a PAs and rural landscape context. Thus, it is vital that policies and strategies are developed to provide a framework for the promotion and development of community-based, eco-oriented approaches to tourism, before the opportunity is lost to the greed of consumerism. Ranking: Moderately Likely

Satisfaction scale: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory, Moderately Unsatisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Highly Unsatisfactory

Sustainability scale: Likely, Moderately Likely, Moderately Unlikely, Unlikely

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS

4.1 CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FOR THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This Project is a formidable example of a reasonably well designed project that lost its direction and focus due to technical incompetence in its execution and, arguably, a certain lack of commitment, as evident from it being managed remotely much of the time by a full-time Director based overseas. The lack of a strategic, integrated approach in implementation, scientifically questionable research and survey work for management planning purposes and slow progress on a number of fronts were not picked up by routine monitoring and reporting procedures, UNDP in its role as implementing agency or the Steering Committee. These and other short-comings were picked up in the MTE, which came as a surprise to all concerned including the Evaluators given the **satisfactory** rating of the Project in the 2006 and 2007 APR/IPRs. This highlights the value of a rigorous, independent, MTE process, which in this case saved the Project from catastrophe because clearly those responsible for implementation either were unaware of being seriously off track or did not know how to deliver the Outcomes (or both).

UNDP Tajikistan shouldered its responsibilities and, following the MTE, took the bold decision to execute the Project itself, setting up a new PMU comprising a number of its own staff and a CTA. The many corrective actions taken by UNDP to get the Project back on track are evident from its response to the recommendations that emerged from the MTE (Annex 6), indicative of a high level of adaptive management. It is to the credit of the PMU and its close working relations with CEP that the overall performance of the Project has improved from **marginally unsatisfactory** at mid-term to **satisfactory** by the end of its term. Key corrective actions that contributed to this overall **satisfactory** result include the following:

- the establishment of inter-ministerial working groups to provide technical, specialist input to the drafting of legislation;
- the development of a concept for PAs that described the national system, explains its purposes and values, defines the tasks ahead for its realisation and identifies a set of tools to help address the tasks;
- the development of a management plan format, based on international standards and national capacities, together with guidance on its use;
- using UNDP's experience in Tajikistan to establish JRCs in the Project area as a means of engage local communities in the environment and energy agendas; and
- ensuring that JRCs are resourced by establishing the MLF and facilitating their inter-dependence.

4.2 ACTIONS TO FOLLOW UP OR REINFORCE INITIAL BENEFITS FROM THE PROJECT

Opportunities to reinforce the benefits from the Project include the following [lead agencies / organisations are indicated in square brackets]:

- **Regulatory framework for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use.** Significant progress has been made with the emergence of the revised *Forest Code* and new *Law on Specially Protected Natural Areas* in 2011 but there remains unfinished business with respect to addressing hunting and pasture management in and around PAs.
 - Work on the Hunting Law began in May 2011, with a Working Group established by CEP and supported financially by GIZ. UNDP is planning to provide financial support from 2012. [CEP/UNDP]
 - A Working Group has been set up to develop a framework for a Pasture Law, which currently does not exist in Tajikistan. This initiative is supported by GIZ and UNDP. [CEP/GIZ/UNDP]

Feedback on the Working Groups established for *Forest Code* and *Law on Specially Protected Natural Areas* suggests that they would have benefitted from: (i) more international perspectives in the specialist areas under consideration; and (ii) a more transparent process so that other stakeholders and specialists could input to their expertise and/or experience.

- **Developing capacity and competences within PA sector.** The Project's partnership with FFI to mainstream training in biodiversity conservation and PAs management across the PA sector appears to have had limited impact with respect to take up by PAs staff, nor does it seem to have much future as FFI's funds are exhausted. A strategy needs to be developed to clearly identify how best to meet the training needs of the PAs sector in its entirety. This is an area in which UNDP should consider providing technical assistance on request from CEP. [CEP/PAs Agency/UNDP]
- **Mainstreaming support biodiversity conservation and PAs across jamoats.** The Project has demonstrated the potential for raising awareness and generating support for PAs through working closely with neighbouring jamoats. Key to this success has been the establishment of JRCs, the most important resource being the micro-loan facility. This approach can be readily replicated across the country, given that UNDP already has a national network of some 120 JRCs, and used as a mechanism for mainstreaming not just biodiversity conservation but UNDP's entire Energy and Programme agenda. [CEP/PAs Agency/UNDP]
- **Sustaining JRCs beyond the life of the Project.** JRCs set up in the 4 target jamoats have been supported financially by the Project, which has now ended. It is crucial that a sustainable mechanism been developed for their long-term survival. The most obvious is a partnership arrangement with the MLF, using some of the profit generated by the MLF's revolving funds to cover JRC running costs. This would also be in the interests of the MLF, given that they rely heavily of JRCs for targeting their micro-loans. [UNDP/jamoats/MLF]
- **Dissemination of lessons learned and best practice guidance.** Lessons learned and experience gained from this Project need to be collated and disseminated in the form of guidance for others undertaking similar activities in Tajikistan, as highlighted in the Project's Exit Strategy and mentioned above in Section 3.3.1. Topics for consideration include:
 - Implementation and execution of UNDP-GEF projects – how to maximise benefits (especially with respect to building capacity among state agency counterparts) and avoid pitfalls. [UNDP/CEP]
 - Efficient and effective mechanisms for delivering new or revised legislation, based on the inter-ministerial working groups approach. [UNDP/CEP]
 - Case study of the MLF, its constitution, mechanism for delivery (via JRCs), performance over Project period (2009-2011) and likelihood of long-term sustainability. [MLF]
 - Guidance on mainstreaming biodiversity conservation across jamoats, as part of UNDP's wider energy and Environment Programme. [UNDP/JRCs]
 - Case study on integrated delivery of energy saving and community-based ecotourism (guesthouses). [UNDP/Energy and Ecotourism Consultants]
 - Best practices for addressing key rural land use and energy issues (forestry, grazing, fire wood demand etc). [UNDP]
- **Replication.** The model management and financial plans, together with their associated processes, are due to be replicated throughout the rest of the PAs system. This needs to be incorporated as a priority within the annual work plan or equivalent of the State PAs Agency and will benefit from technical oversight, particularly the financial planning which needs to be coordinated system-wide in order to generate a total budget for the PAs system. [CEP/PAs Agency/UNDP]

4.3 PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS UNDERLINING MAIN OBJECTIVES

The Project is the first of its kind to address the development of Tajikistan's PAs system in its entirety, based on informed, objective, participatory management planning, while also seeking to be sustainable financially and in socio-economic terms with respect to the livelihood interest of neighbouring local communities. Much can be done **to consolidate** the Project's achievements along the lines outlined in the previous section and UNDP's *Scaling up effective management planning in Protected Areas* Project, scheduled to begin in 2012, provides a timely opportunity and potentially some resources to do so. The scaling-up strategy is two-fold: (i) to develop the secondary legislation pertaining to the new PAs Law (regulatory normative acts, guidelines, etc.); and (ii) to scale-up the application of the new management and financial planning protocols developed under this Project and apply them to the entire PA system in Tajikistan (19 PAs in total).

In addition, new ground needs to be broken on a number of fronts **to build** on the Project's achievements. Priorities for the PAs system should include the following:

- **Ecosystem services assessment** is being used increasingly as a tool for management planning purposes, building on more traditional biodiversity and socio-economic surveys and monitoring approaches. Its benefits include its integrated, holistic approach, providing stakeholders with a much clearer understanding of the values (often quantified) of maintaining a healthy, functioning ecosystem. It can also be used for assessing the value of the entire PAs system, which can be helpful not only in promoting understanding among stakeholders but also in lobbying politicians and the Ministry of Finance for adequate resources to protect and maintain these global assets.
- **Training in biodiversity conservation and PAs management** needs to be institutionalised, most probably through the establishment of either a national or regional training and research centre to meet the long-term requirements of this sector.
- **Ecotourism.** The Project has introduced the concept of community-based, sustainable tourism (ecotourism) within the target jamoats. Currently, with low numbers of people visiting PAs, there exists a window of opportunity to lay the foundations for appropriate forms and levels of tourism, before Tajikistan becomes an international destination for tourism and unsustainable consumerism takes hold of development. Tourism development should be based on principles of responsibility and sustainability for the benefit of visitors, local communities and conservation (nature and culture). Tajikistan needs to develop a sustainable tourism or ecotourism policy, and a strategy for its delivery in the regions, beginning perhaps with the Gissar Mountains due to their proximity to Dushanbe.

UNDP Tajikistan is well respected and much appreciated by government, placing it in a strong position to encourage government to move forward in these directions and offering to provide technical assistance, coordination and facilitation as appropriate.

4.4 BEST AND WORST PRACTICES IN ADDRESSING ISSUES RELATING TO RELEVANCE, PERFORMANCE AND SUCCESS

4.4.1 Selection of executing agency and monitoring its performance

Lessons previously identified in the MTE, and with which the present Evaluators are in agreement, were as follows:

- Good management can overcome a poorly-designed project. Poor management can sink a well-designed project.
- Good project reporting can mask a myriad of ills unless the PSC, UNDP-CO, and perhaps even UNDP-GEF, challenge them harder.
- Technical protected area management planning projects require the Project Director or CTA to actually possess a technical grounding in protected area management planning.

- The slack built into this atypically long Medium-sized Project (five years) by the designers has successfully allowed for limitations in capacity in individuals and institutions and provided the project with a chance of a successful conclusion despite numerous difficulties.
- Building technical capacity at a national level through NGO execution is unlikely to be effective unless the NGO actually has the appropriate technical expertise.
- Technical exchange programmes should not just occur because co-funding can be provided by an agency. Technical, economic, and cultural contexts should be taken into account to ensure that a suitable match exists to provide a relevant framework in which the newly obtained technical material can be used.

The above 'lessons' revolve principally around the selection of the Executing Agency, its oversight by the Implementing Agency and the reporting and other processes in place, including the Project Steering Committee, to monitor implementation. Clearly, the Implementing Agency (UNDP) and client (CEP) has learnt from bitter experience the critical importance of selecting an Executing Agency whose area of competence and expertise matches with a project's objective. Anything less, for whatever pragmatic reason (e.g. co-financing opportunities), exposes a project to the likelihood of less than satisfactory implementation, as demonstrated vividly during the first half of this Project.

Responsibility lies with the Implementing Agency at Country Office and regional levels, as well as with the GEF Secretariat, which also reviews Medium-Size Project proposals prior to their approval. It is also important to recognise that UNDP COs are often in a diplomatically difficult position when confronted with an option that is technically unsound but may be supported by government or other in-country partners. In such cases, their regional offices and the GEF Secretariat may need to be more assertive and provide clearer guidance on acceptable executing arrangements.

4.4.2 Project formulation timeframe

The second area in which lessons need to be learnt concern the huge delays (nearly 3 years) between the Project's approval in April 2003 and its actual commencement in January 2006. This had two serious consequences:

- The original concept of the Project changed from being focused on 3 PAs to the entire PAs system, due to changes in GEF and national policies. The Project's design never demonstrably accommodated this change in nuance, despite a little bit of tweaking to the Project Document, until post-MTE when the newly established PMU and its CTA refocused the overall approach towards the PAs system.
- Most of the cash co-financing agreed at the time of the approval of the PDF-A in April 2003 was no longer available by the start of the Project in January 2006. A large injection of TRAC funds from UNDP post-MTE resolved a potential cash crisis and premature end to Project implementation.

The formulation and approval process for UNDP-GEF projects has evolved significantly during the last decade but, where such delays are unavoidable, further resources should be made available to thoroughly review all design and funding aspects of the PDF-A that might otherwise jeopardise implementation.

4.4.3 Project management

UNDP Tajikistan is growing rapidly as an organisation, with an ever increasingly large portfolio of projects under its implementation and, in some cases, execution. In the case of the Energy and Environment Programme new organisational structures and management arrangements need to be introduced along the lines proposed in the 2011-2015 Programme Document to accommodate the demands placed on staff already overstretched by having to manage large portfolios of projects. This is important not only for staff well-being but also with respect to the organisation's credibility in maintaining high standards and best practices in project implementation, including

quality assurance of outputs. Diplomatic skills and quality time are also a pre-requisite for the establishment, nurturing and maintenance of dynamic and healthy partnerships to help deliver project Outcomes and provide sustainability beyond the life of a project. In the case of executing UNDP-GEF medium and full-size projects, most require at least a dedicated Project Manager, supported by a Project Assistant, to oversee implementation and coordination of activities, manage relations with partners and other stakeholders and, importantly, to commission, supervise and assure the quality of work provided by consultants. Anything less is likely to raise questions about the sustainability of UNDP's entire Energy and Environment Programme.

4.4.4 Partnership working

Much of the Project's success post-MTE, when performance in general was very good, is due to the strong partnership approach in its implementation, involving government agencies, other development agencies, non-governmental organisations, private sector and members of the local community. These formal and informal partnerships included:

- much stronger working relationship between the Project (UNDP/PMU), CEP and its PAs and Forestry & Hunting agencies;
- inter-ministerial working groups to draft new legislation, facilitated by PMU and, in the case of the *Forestry Code*, also involving GIZ; and
- close working relationship between UNDP/PMU and jamoats, resulting in establishment of JRCs. Successful establishment of 4 new JRCs in each of the target jamoats resulted in a series of new partnerships, for example:
 - JRCs and PAs, facilitated by PMU;
 - JRCs and MLF, facilitated by PMU; and
 - JRCs, MLF and energy and ecotourism consultants.

Much of the best practice that merits writing up as guidance and case studies is identified above in Section 4.2. Most of it reflects good practice in partnership working, providing effective mechanisms for delivering Project Outcomes and Outputs.

TOR

(provisionally attached separately as 24 pages!)

Annex 2: Itinerary, with field visits and Project stakeholders interviewed

**MISSION PROGRAMME FOR
GISSAR BIODIVERSITY PROJECT TERMINAL EVALUATION**

Evaluators: Dr Michael J.B. Green
Ms Gulbahor Djumabaeva

Place: Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Date: 01 – 10 November 2011

Time	Activity	Participants	Venue
Tuesday, 1 November 2011			
04.00-06.00	Arrival to Dushanbe		
10.00-11.00	Meeting with Mr. Sukhrob Khoshmukhamedov, UNDP ARR, Mr. Ahad Mahmoudov, UNDP Energy and Environment Programme Manager, Ms. Nargizakhon Usmanova, UNDP Programme Associate	Mirzo, Mark, Michael, Gulbahor	UNDP CO, Ayni 39
11.20 – 12.00	Discussion of the Project Activities (presentation)	Ahad, Shodibek, Mirzo, Mark, Michael, Gulbahor,	Vefa Center, 9 th Floor
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch		
13.00 – 14.00	Meeting with Mr. Firuz Ibragimov, CACILM MCB National Coordinator and Ms. Takhmina Touraeva, Climate Risk Management Project Manager/Transport Advisor	Shodibek, Mirzo, Mark, Michael, Gulbahor,	
14.20 – 15.30	Meeting with Mr. Nurali Saidov, Chairman of the State Agency for Protected Areas under the Committee on Environmental Protection	Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	PA Agency
16.00 – 17.00	Meeting with Mr. Madibon Saidov, Deputy Chairman of the State Agency of Forestry and Hunting under the Committee on Environmental Protection	Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	Forestry Agency
Wednesday, 2 November 2011			
09.30 – 10.30	Meeting with Mr. Ziyoratshoh Sadulloev, member of Environmental Commission of the Lower Chamber of the Parliament	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	Parliament
10:30 - 11.30	Meeting with Management Planning Team (Mr. Rustam Murodov, Team Leader, Mr. Ivan Ustyan, Consultant on MP,) in order to discuss PA System concept, MP format, Financial Planning Tools and Instructions	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	Vefa Center
11.30 – 12.20	Meeting with Mr. Alexander Schwartz, GIS Expert	, Mark, Michael, Gulbahor	Vefa Center

12.20 – 13.00	Lunch		
13.00 – 14.00	Travel to Gissar		
14.00 – 15.00	Meeting with Mr Sharopov Assomidin, Chairman, Gissar Forestry Agency Visit nursery	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	
15.00 – 16.00	Meeting with the two Managers of Almasi Reserve (Gissar and Shahrinav leskhoz sectors)	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	
16.00 – 17.00	Driving back to Dushanbe		
Thursday, 03 November 2011			
08.00 – 10.00	Travel to Labi Jar – Shirkent NHP New Admin. Office		
10.00 – 12.00	Meeting with Mr. Kutbidin Rajabov, Director of Historical Park Shirkent, project site visits	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	Shirkent Office
12:00-13:00	Lunch (at HNP Office)		
13:00-14:30	1. Meeting with JRC leader, Mr. Umarali Abdullaev 2. Travel to Khonaroh Kuhi of Gissar district to see guesthouse	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	
14:30-16:00	Presentation of Bakhridin Isomatdinov, CBT consultant, energy efficiency pilots by Mr. Shavkat Saidmuradov	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	
16.00 – 17.00	Driving back to Dushanbe		
Friday, 04 November 2011			
09.20 – 11.30	Meeting with Micro-Loan Foundation “Imdodi Rushd”, Mr. Timur Yusupov, Credit Manager, MLF Director, Mr. Rakhmonov Zakir, Assistant, Ms. Madina Abdunazarova, Chief Accountant, Mr. Shamsiddinov Rahimjon	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	MLF Office
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch		
13.30 – 14.00	NGO “Youth of 21st Century” (JRC Sustainability Plan and capacity building trainings for JRCs) Mr.Umedjon, Deputy Director, Mr. Timur, Director	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	Vefa Center, 9 th Floor
14.30 – 15.30	Meeting with Mr. Ubaidullo Akramov, Expert on CB and MP and Deputy of PA Agency		
16.00 – 17.00	Discussion of project activities / final discussion with Mark (if weather forecast looks good)		
Saturday, 05 November 2011			
07:00 - 10:00	Shirkent HNP field trip / trek	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	
10:00-10:15	Meeting with JRC Leader of Jamoat Rabot, Mr. Abdujalil Haitov	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz,	

		Michael, Gulbahor	
10:15 – 10:30	Visiting guesthouse, energy efficiency projects (cooking stove, heating stove, solar heater, insulation)	Mirzo, Mark, Shodibek, Firuz, Shavkat, Michael, Gulbahor	
10:30 – 18:00	Site seeing and visit of dinosaur's footprints, guide man, Mr. Tursunali Samadov	Mirzo, Mark, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	
18:00-19:30	Refreshments		
19:30 - 21:00	Return to Dushanbe		
Sunday, 06 November 2011			
10:00-13:00	Review and consolidation of information / conclusions so far.	Michael, Gulbahor	
12:00-13:00	Lunch		
15:00-18:00	Review and consolidation of information / conclusions so far.	Michael, Gulbahor	
18:00 - 18:20	Final meeting with Mark before his departure	Michael, Gulbahor, Mirzo, Mark	
Monday, 07 November 2011			
09.00 – 10.00	Travel to Shahrinav district		
10.15 – 12.00	Meeting with Ms. Gulshan Karimova, Chairwoman of Jamoat Resource Center Sabo of Shahrinav (discussion of community activities, mobilization, gender mainstreaming, etc)	Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch		
13.30 – 16.00	Project sites visit - energy efficient pilots, and other community related initiatives (i.e. women medicinal plant collectors – Kurbanova Sharofat, MLF representative – Yunusova Jamila) Visit to Medical point	Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	JRC Sabo
16:00- 17:00	Return Dushanbe		
Tuesday, 08 November 2011			
09.00 – 10.00	Travel to Vahdat district		
10.15 – 11.00	Meeting with Ixromov Muzafar, Chairman of Romit Jamoat, and Sabzov Imomali		
11:00 – 12:00	Meeting with JRC leader, Mr. Kuvat Murodov		JRC Romit
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch		
13.30 – 17.00	Meeting with Mr. Hamoidin Mahmudov, Director of PA Romit; Project sites visit – Information Center within the PA Romit	Mirzo, Shodibek, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	
17.00 – 18.00	Driving back to Dushanbe		

Wednesday, 09 November 2011			
09:00-10:00	Meeting with Mr. Khurshed Kholov, UNDP-GEF SGP Coordinator in Tajikistan	Michael, Gulbahor	Vefa Center, 9 th Floor
10:00-11:00	Meeting with GIZ: Forestry sector partners, Ms. Rozia Kirgizbekova, Coordinator	Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor	GIZ Office
11:00-12:00	Meeting with FFI representative, in Tajikistan Mr. Ubaid Gulamadshoev, Project Manager and Melikbek, Project Assistant	Michael and Gulbahor	Vefa Center, 9 th Floor
13:00 -14:00	Lunch		
14:00-14:30	Meeting with Mr. Davlatov, Deputy Chairman of Committee on Environmental Protection	Michael, Gulbahor, Shodibek	Vefa Center 9 th Floor
14:30-15:30	Any additional follow up meetings based on identified needs during TE		Vefa Center 9 th Floor
15:30-18:00	Preparations for interactive workshop / seminar on Thursday		Vefa Center 9 th Floor
Thursday, 10 November 2011			
09:00-13:50	Preparations for workshop/seminar	Michael and Gulbahor	
14.15 – 15.40	Interactive workshop / seminar: presentation of key findings Mr. Ubaidullo Akramov, Deputy Director State Agency of PAs Mr. Ivan Petrovich Ustyan, Chairman of Reserve Department and Natural Parks, State Agency of PAs Mr. Rustam Muratov, Institute of Zoology and Parasitology, Academy of Science Mr. Abusattor Saidov, Director of Institute of Zoology and Parasitology, Academy of Science Mr. Ghiyosiddin Yatimov, Senior Specialist of Department of Forestry Development, State Agency of Forestry and Hunting Mr. Abdughaffor Jalilov, Head of Flora and Fauna Protection Department, State Agency of Forestry and Hunting	Mirzo, Firuz, Michael, Gulbahor, key project partners	
16:00-17:15	Debriefing with Mr. Sukhrob Khoshmukhamedov, UNDP ARR/Programme, Ms Nargizakhon Usmanova, UNDP Energy and Environment Programme Associate	Michael, Gulbahor, Mirzo	
17:30-18:30	Wrap-up discussion with project (scheduling / process for TE report)	Michael, Gulbahor,	

Annex 3: List of documents reviewed

Project documentation

-
- Project Document
- Inception Report
- Quarterly Combined Delivery Reports
- Annual Work Plans
- UNDP/GEF Annual Project Reviews/Project Implementation Reports
- Mid-Term Evaluation
- CTA Mission reports
- Revise Logical Framework Matrix
- Minutes of Steering Committee meetings

Project technical reports

- PA System Concept
- Management Plan Instructions and format
- Target PA management plans
- METT reports for years 2006 and 2011
- Energy efficiency survey report

GEF and UNDP technical guidance

- UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF-Financed Projects, 2012
- The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, 2010
- The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, 2006
- Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations, 2008

NB Other literature consulted is referenced in the footnotes.

Annex 4: Initial evaluation findings: proceedings of meeting with PMU and partners delivered on 10 November 2010 (participants listed in Annex 2)

The slide presentation, reproduced here, was followed by questions and discussion, which are summarised below but not attributed.

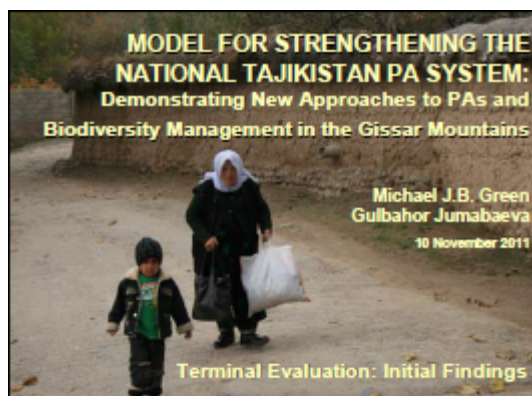
Summary of feedback from participants

- Solutions and ways forward appreciated.
- Very challenging presentation
- Evaluation is very objective. Zoology Institute has been involved since 2006. Fully agree with progress over the 6 years as presented – can see it in the 3 pilot areas. Project Team has worked closely with FFI, with whom Zoology Institute is a partner. Training course has been a big contribution.
- Liked the evaluation method. Good to start from the beginning. Progress of components not equal (e.g. Romit), which is understandable. Concerted action by many people. Good demonstration project at national level.
- Did not know about criteria for evaluation. Evaluators can read between the lines very well.

Students worked with CARE (10 undergraduates, of whom 1 now has a PhD and 2 others are near to completing their Ph.Ds).

No protected areas system concept before the new protected areas law – this was not mentioned in presentation.

Management plans developed for 3 protected areas – provided learning experience which later enabled them to assist with developing a management plan for the World Heritage nomination (Tajik National Park).
- PMU has worked together for 3 years, having started in the dark. Thanks owed to CTA to whom the whole country is grateful for developing the new management plan format. US\$ 60,000 was made available for financial planning (protected areas). Role of UNDP is to catalyse and facilitate.
- Energy efficient guest houses not piloted but Jamoat Resource Centres handling foreigner guests: 17 in 2010, 22 in 2011 at Shirkent. Association of Ecotourism for Gissar Mountains will handle foreigner payments and pass on proceeds to JRCs (as local community members do not like to ask for money and would otherwise tend to give away their hospitality for free).



PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

- **Promote accountability for achievement of objectives**
 - Assessment of results, effectiveness, processes and performance of partners
- **Promote learning and knowledge sharing to inform policies, strategies, programmes and projects from:**
 - Project results
 - Lessons learned
 - Feedback on issues recurrent across portfolio
- **Provide recommendations**
 - Replication of Project successes

BASIS OF EVALUATION

EVALUATION SHOULD ASSESS:

- Project concept and design
- Project implementation
- Project outputs, outcomes and impacts
- Issues of special consideration
- Follow-up on MTE recommendations

EVALUATION SHOULD BE:

- Independent
- Impartial
- Ethical
- Transparent
- Results – accessible, shared with partners

GEF EVALUATION CRITERIA

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS TESTED FOR:

- **Relevance** [scale: satisfactory]
- **Effectiveness** [scale: satisfactory]
- **Efficiency** [scale: satisfactory]
- **Results/impacts** [scale: satisfactory]
- **Sustainability** [scale: likelihood]

Satisfactory scale*: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

Likelihood scale: L, ML, MU, U

*Also applied to Project Monitoring & Evaluation system

GEF EVALUATION CRITERIA

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS, with respect to FORMULATION, IMPLEMENTATION and RESULTS, are rated using:

SATISFACTORY SCALE

- **HS** [Highly Satisfactory]
- **S** [Satisfactory]
- **MS** [Marginally Satisfactory]
- **MU** [Marginally Unsatisfactory]
- **U** [Unsatisfactory]
- **HU** [Highly Unsatisfactory]

T.E. APPROACH

- Review key documents
- Engage with stakeholders (partners, national agencies, jamoats, PA staff)
 - Acknowledge
 - Challenge
 - Build consensus
- Evidence based - logical framework
- Forward looking [float ideas]

PROJECT BIODATA

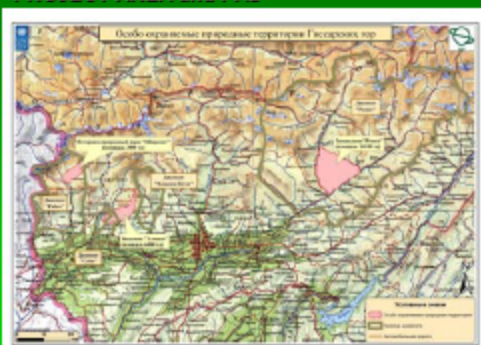
Length of project:	6 years
Total budget (cash):	US\$ 2.155 m*
▪ GEF contribution (45%):	US\$ 0.975 m
▪ UNDP Country Office (42%):	US\$ 0.900 m
▪ USFS FAO WFP GfD... (13%):	US\$ 0.280 m
Expenditure to-date (12/2010):	US\$ 1.554 m
Funding Agency:	GEF
GEF Implementing Agency:	UNDP
Executing Agency (DEX):	CARE+UNDP
Client:	SCEPF

*[in-kind from Government, UNDP, GTZ – US\$ 182,500]

PROJECT HISTORY

- 1999: NGOs conceived and submitted project to UNDP didn't meet GEF criteria
- 2001: PDF-A developed, later re-designed
- 2003-04-18: PDF-A approved
- 2005-08-15: Project Document signed
- 2006-01: Project fully operational
- 2008-06: Project assessed as MU by MTE, after which execution transferred from CARE to UNDP and CTA recruited
- 2009-10: Implementation fast-tracked
- ??????: Project extended on no-cost basis from January to December 2011.

PROJECT AREA and PAs



2008 MID-TERM EVALUATION

OUTCOME

- Project assessed as Marginally Unsatisfactory:
 - Done well in developing new PA legislation
 - But rest of project is strategically off course and technical implementation is weak.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Transfer project execution from CARE to UNDP
- Recruit CTA to realign technical direction in line with project objective
- Establish new project team and structure for delivery of objective and outcomes

EXTENSION (1/2010 – 12/2011)

JUSTIFICATION FOR NO-COST EXTENSION:

- Raised in MTE as an option to provide enough time for management plans to be replicated among majority of Tajikistan's PAs.
- No-cost extension of at least 1 year advocated by CTA in 11-2008 and agreed in principle by Regional Technical Adviser at that time.
- Project closing date changed to 31-12-2011 following submission of 2010 PIR.

GOAL & OBJECTIVES

Goal:

- To catalyze the improved conservation of globally significant biodiversity in Tajikistan through the demonstration of new mechanisms and approaches for effective management of PAs and natural resources adjacent to them

Objective:

- To strengthen the management effectiveness and sustainability of the three selected PAs of different types on the southern slopes of the Gissar Mountains, and thereby to provide models and best practices replicable throughout the national PA system.

OUTCOMES

1. **Strengthened environmental governance provides a more sustainable land-use context for the PA system**
2. **New management practices are introduced and capacity built in target PAs; overall management effectiveness and sustainability of the PA system substantively improved**
3. **Practical examples for stakeholders of how to achieve environmentally sustainable livelihoods around target PAs**

OUTCOME 1 Strengthened environmental governance provides more sustainable land-use context for the PA system

- ➊ 1.1 Legal and policy framework for PA management and enforcement strengthened
 - ➊ New Forest Code (2011)
 - ➋ New PAs Law – expected in 2011/12
- ➋ 1.2 Overall regulatory framework and enabling environment for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resources use in and around PAs is strengthened and/or clarified
 - ➊ Other enabling legislation on pastures and hunting underway
- ✗ 1.3 Participatory land use and natural resource management plans developed and piloted in the PAs and their buffer zones

OUTCOME 2 New management practices introduced and capacity built in target PAs; overall management effectiveness and sustainability of PA system substantively improved

- ➊ 2.1 Technical knowledge and management capacity of PA staff improved
 - ➊ Small number undergraduates provided placements – no tangible outcomes
 - ➋ Study tours to US – interesting but little tangible application of experience
 - ➌ Training by FFI on project management, biodiversity, PAs etc – little take up
- ➋ 2.2 Field conservation capacity of the PAs strengthened
 - ➊ Information base for management planning – weak
 - ➋ Monitoring system, supported by MIS including GIS – weak
 - ➌ Community participation and awareness well developed through JRCs
 - ➍ Rationalising PA boundaries, strengthening infrastructure – progress
 - ➎ Good management/financial planning – little/no time to implement

OUTCOME 2 New management practices introduced and capacity built in target PAs; overall management effectiveness and sustainability of PA system substantively improved

- ➊ 2.3 Sustainable financing mechanisms in place for the three PAs
 - ➊ Financial plans for Shikent and Almost – premature for Rorrit due to BR designation
 - ➋ Financial plans unsustainable – not reflected in 2012 SAPA budget
- ➋ 2.4 Networking and exchange of best practices throughout PA system established; replication of lessons generated by the project is ensured
 - ➊ Newsletter initiated by SCEP, facilitated by project
 - ➋ Annual meeting of SAPAs initiated, with project support
 - ➌ Management plan framework adopted for few other PAs
 - ➍ No opportunity (time) for developing best practice in implementation

OUTCOME 3 Practical examples for stakeholders to achieve environmentally sustainable livelihoods around PAs

- ➊ 3.1 Pilot environmentally sustainable income generation activities introduced to demonstrate approaches/mechanisms for reducing socio-economic pressures on natural resources in/ around PAs
 - ➊ Household survey provides good info base (MTE)
 - ➋ MLF provides sustainable income source via JRCs
 - ➌ Range of income generating activities introduced – their reduction of socio-economic pressure on natural resources is assumed but not monitored.

OUTCOME 3 Practical examples for stakeholders to achieve environmentally sustainable livelihoods around PAs

- ➊ 3.2 Alternative options for producing and conserving energy are demonstrated helping to reduce use of fuel wood
 - ➊ Piloting of house insulation, solar heating and efficient stoves linked to development of guesthouses (ecotourism)
 - ➋ Construction work incomplete and ecotourism not piloted
- ➋ 3.3 Dissemination of lessons learned to relevant government authorities, NGO's, communities and development agencies and facilitation of follow up initiatives
 - ➊ Experience on alternative livelihoods, MLF and energy efficiencies yet to be collated and disseminated through JCRs, SCEP website etc.
 - ➋ Lessons learnt not yet identified and incorporated in terminal report.

SWOT - STRENGTHS

- New Forestry Code (April 2011)
- Involvement of Civil Society and government in improving legislation
- Relevant Government agencies (agriculture, environment protection, PAs, Parliament) have coherent strategy on effective management of Natural Resources
- Priorities for the next five years identified in Management Plan for PAs
- Increased knowhow and capacity in management planning (with stakeholders)
- Increased awareness of communities (children + adults) in/outside PAs about values of nature
- Dialogue between communities and Gov agencies

SWOT - CONSTRAINTS

- Government agencies and jamoats need to understand concept of eco-tourism
- No time for implementation to gain experience and learn lessons (e.g. new management plans, energy efficiencies, ecotourism)
- Strategic direction and skills in Data Management (MIS, GIS) undeveloped for monitoring
- Infrastructure for PAs is poor (NB not a weakness of project)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Consolidate the legislative framework – pasture, hunting – followed by development of bye laws, regulations etc
- Mainstream management planning (with financial planning and monitoring) across PAs sector
- Link PA financial plans to PA budgets submitted to Ministry of Finance
- JRCs, with MLFs, provide a sustainable vehicle for community development in which environment is given high priority

OPPORTUNITIES cont.

- UNDP Scale-Up project provides for consolidation and replication
 - Implementation (with monitoring) of management plans
 - National ecotourism policy – enabling environment
 - Ecotourism model for this region
- UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme
 - ? Management plan implementation
 - Other JCRs (i.e. not Sabo to lead next tranche)

LESSONS

- Legal interventions fast-tracked by working groups:**
- Link practitioners with legislators
 - Cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary
 - Undertake field visits
- Management planning framework:**
- Based on international best practice
 - Adapted to national context (capabilities, capacities, resources)
 - Financial planning and monitoring are corner stones
- Jamoat Resource Centres effective delivery vehicle:**
- Democratic basis, representative of community members
 - Holistic - operate beyond PA boundaries
 - Sustainable financing mechanisms through MLFs
- MTE and UNDP's response can redeem a project:**
- Providing leadership – technical and managerial
 - Identifying and developing right delivery mechanisms
 - Generating top-down and bottom-up support
 - Commitment and trust

Annex 5: List of Project Steering Committee members

United Nations Development Programme	Mr Sukhrob Khoshmukhamedov Mr Ahad Mahmudov	Energy & Environment Programme Coordinator Energy & Environment Programme Manager
Committee for Environment Protection at the Government of Tajikistan	Mr Khursand Davlatov ¹ Mr Nurali Saidov ² Mr Nematullo Safarov	Steering Committee Chairman, Deputy Chairman of Committee on Environment Protection Director of State Agency for Protected Areas Biodiversity Expert
Academy of Science	Mr. Abdusattor Saidov	Director of Institute of Zoology and Parasitology

1 – Replaced Tojinisso Nosirova Deputy of the Chairman of the State Committee On Protection of Environment and Forestry of Tajikistan in 2008.

2 – Replaced Khasan Anvarov in 3-4/2011, who in 2008 replaced Kokul Kasirov, Director General of the State Agency for Protected Areas, 'Tajik National Park', and the Project Government Coordinator.

Chairman now Salimov (from 2/2011); new Head of PAs from (3-4 2011)

The Project Steering Committee met on a total of 6 occasions (18 July 2007, 4 March 2008, 28 August 2008, March 2009, 18 September 2009 and 20 December 2010. Membership changed throughout the project period due to institutional reforms, as well as individuals being posted elsewhere. Also, both the Agency for Land Utilization, Geodesy and Cartography and the Children's Ecology Society, Zumrad, sat on the Steering Committee during the CARE era.

Annex 6: Management response to Mid-Term Evaluation

Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendation				
Responsibility	Task	Time frame	Deliverable	PMU response (post MTE)
The MTET recommends that the Project clarifies its funding and spending plans for the remainder of the implementation period. [page 9]				
UNDP	Meet with the Committee for Environmental Protection and clarify the GoT's funding intentions.	Within first quarter after the MTE (i.e. 3 rd quarter 2008)	Written agreement, or signed minutes, clarifying GoT's funding intentions.	Numerous meetings were conducted throughout Project implementation to re-confirm in-kind co-financing from CEP. Government co-financing was confirmed by Letter of Agreement with the State Agency on Forestry & Hunting, CEP.
Project Director/UNDP	Formulate alternative activity plan as a contingency should the currently budgeted co-financing identified from "Other" sources not be obtained; and in the light of any budgetary shortfall arising from the GoT.	By end of November 2008 to be in place by projected project handover from CARE to UNDP in December 2008.	Contingency activity and funding plan.	Project revised LFM to focus on sustainable livelihood opportunities through establishment of JRCs (community-based organizations), initiation of microfinance activities, and design and implementation of small projects on sustainable land-use around protected areas following CTA mission in November 2008. Additional TRAC resources USD 670,000 (in addition to initial USD 125,000 for MSP implementation) were allocated to cover micro-credit activities (USD 600,000) and CTA costs.
The MTET recommends that a rigorous system of computer back-up, especially for the GIS, 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. [page 29]				
PMU	Determine and implement a policy for backing up all project computer data on a regular basis	Immediately	Revised back-up procedures in operation	Recommendations no longer applicable once Project execution transferred to UNDP CO, for whom
PMU	Ensure two copies of data are kept separate from each other and from the project office, and that these are backed up alternately.	With immediate effect.	Multiple back-ups of computer data.	standard back-up procedures are applied across the organisation. In practice, separate copies of Project files, including GIS, are held in PMU office and PAs Agency, in addition to
PMU	Consider purchase of a fire-proof safe for keeping computer back-ups and other valuable project information	As soon as possible	Fire proof safe installed in the office.	UNDP's back-up copies being held off-site. On completion, separate copies of Project files will be handed over to PAs Agency

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Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendation				
Responsibility	Task	Time frame	Deliverable	PMU response (post MTE)
				and State Agency for Forestry & Hunting, as well as Shirkent NHP.
The MTET recommends that with the change from NGO-execution to DEX modality that a number of key actions are taken to re-align the Project's priorities and its ability to deliver on them. [page 24]				
UNDP and UNDP-GEF Bratislava	Revise the project budget to allow recruitment of a CTA in place of the IPD	By end of Oct 2008.	Revised budgets	UNDP provided additional core funds as insufficient budget remained to finish Project following exit of CARE International.
UNDP	Recruit CTA specialist in PA management planning, preferably with Central Asian experience	By start of Dec 2008 latest (by Nov 2008 would provide a overlap with the current IPD)	Signed contract.	CTA began work in country in November 2008, continuing until November 2011 (6 missions).
UNDP (and National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre?)	Identify and appoint Govt. Partner Agency – possibly the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre	By start of Dec 2008.	Signed Memorandum of Agreement.	Committee for Environmental Protection assigned as partner agency in 2008, following re-structuring of Ministry of Agriculture, Environmental Protection & Forestry in January 2008. Based on decision of PSC on 29 August 2008, and LPAC meeting, execution modality changed from NGO to DEX execution.
UNDP (and National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre?)	Identify and appoint a National Project Coordinator	By start of Dec 2008	Agreed TOR.	CEP assigned as partner agency in 2008, and National Project Coordinator also appointed in 2008. However, due to constant changes in senior management team of CEP, National Coordinator of Project has changed 3 times since then.
UNDP	Advertise and (re-) appoint staff for PMU to ensure Project benefits from best available technical and managerial capability	By start of Dec 2008	Signed contracts.	New PMU established in 01/2008; previous National Project Manager retained as Biodiversity Technical Coordinator/Adviser to Project.
UNDP	Re-tender NGO contracts for socio-economic activities as necessary and according to budget limitations	According to expiry of current contracts	Signed contracts.	This proved unnecessary as UNDP Tajikistan has its own capacity to oversee socio-economic activities.
UNDP/GEF/CTA/PMU	Revise logframe to clarify project priorities	By end of Dec 2008	Agreed logframe	LFM revised Nov. 2008 (CTA 1 st Mission Report).
PSC	Obtain PSC's endorsements as necessary	As soon as possible according to meetings' schedule	Minuted endorsements.	PSC Minutes as of March 2009.
The MTET recommends that with the strategic changes in management recommended above, that a new approach be				

Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendation				
Responsibility	Task	Time frame	Deliverable	PMU response (post MTE)
applied to the system-wide capacity development of management planning, namely using a training of trainers approach. [page 34]				
UNDP/new PMU	Develop a training of trainers approach to build system-wide capacity in management planning.	Assuming new PMU starts in Jan 2009, identify trainers by end-Feb 2009; provide 10 months of hands-on training including overseas course if funds allow, and have them start their own training programmes by Jan 2010.	Four to six trained trainers in PA management planning.	A Management Planning Team, comprising 3 experts created in May 2009 to train PAs staff and facilitate management planning with local communities and other stakeholders. CTA developed a standard management plan format that was adopted state-wide.
The MTET recommends that the contracts of the scientists [†] (except those working on <i>Naja oxiana</i>) be cancelled forthwith until new, relevant, and scientifically-justifiable work programmes can be developed for 2009; and that the entire scientific programme be reviewed and improved by an independent STAP consultant. [page 38]				
CARE/UNDP	Cancel scientific contracts except for the one concerning <i>Naja oxiana</i> which needs to be curtailed to population survey only.	With immediate effect	Letters cancelling contracts.	No further research contracts or extensions to existing ones were issued post-MTE as (i) no proposals were submitted and (ii) very few funds were available.
CARE	Engage an independent consultant selected from the GEF STAP roster to review the entire scientific programme and to develop sound scientific methodologies pertinent to the Project's needs i.e. a) to the Project's own indicators; and b) to the requirements of the management plan.	As soon as possible, preferably no later than Aug 2008.	Report of findings. New work programmes for each discipline identifying aims, relevance, protocols for investigations and methodologies for analyses.	
PMU/CARE	Amend existing contracts as necessary to ensure approaches of consultants meets with the requirements of the STAP reviewer.	As soon as possible as directed by reviewer.	Amended contracts.	
New PMU/UNDP	Re-appoint or re-tender new scopes of work to the scientist/wider scientific community.	By end February 2009.	New contracts.	
The MTET recommends reluctantly that all of the Project's Objective Performance Indicators relating to species be cancelled forthwith pending agreement of GEF on the basis of meaningless methodologies and baseline figures; with the exception of the mark and recapture programme on <i>Naja oxiana</i> in Shirkent [page 39]				
UNDP/GEF Bratislava	Cancel all species-based Project Objective Performance Indicators pending GEF's advice.	By Dec 2008.	Written agreement from GEF to the cancellation of indicators.	LFM revised in Nov. 2008 and changes officially endorsed during PIR preparation in 2009.

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Mid-Term Evaluation Recommendation				
Responsibility	Task	Time frame	Deliverable	PMU response (post MTE)
The MTET recommends that the Project completes those trips to/from the USA already arranged, but cancels any other such trips planned. Instead, if monies exist and reasons warrant any further technical exchange trips, more appropriate countries and itineraries are selected. [page 40]				
UNDP/PMU	Arrange any further technical exchanges more appropriately to the context of Tajikistan.	Remainder of the Project.	Revised technical exchange trips.	No further trips were undertaken overseas. JRCs visited other communities having similar experience in north of Tajikistan.

Annex 7: Project component ratings

PROJECT COMPONENT OR OBJECTIVE	RATING SCALE*						RATING
	HU	U	MU	MS	S	HS	
PROJECT FORMULATION							
Conceptualization/Design							
Stakeholder participation							
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION							
Implementation Approach							
The use of the logical framework							
Adaptive management							
Use/establishment of information technologies							
Operational relationships between the institutions involved							
Technical capacities							
Monitoring and evaluation							
Stakeholder participation							
Production and dissemination of information							
Local resource users and NGOs participation							
Establishment of partnerships (JRC, MLF, ecotourism etc)							
Involvement and support of governmental institutions							
PROJECT RESULTS							
Attainment of Outcomes/ Achievement of objectives							
Achievement of objective							
Outcome 1							
Outcome 2							
Outcome 3							
OVERALL PROJECT ACHIEVEMENT & IMPACT							

*Satisfaction scale: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory, Moderately Unsatisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Highly Unsatisfactory

Annex 8: Status of delivery of objective and outcomes rating of performance indicators, based on Logical Framework Matrix

#Status of delivery colour codes: **Green** / completed – indicator shows successful achievement
Yellow – indicator shows expected completion by the end of the project
Red – Indicator show poor achievement - unlikely to be complete by end of Project

**Satisfaction rating scale:* Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory, Moderately Unsatisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Highly Unsatisfactory

PROJECT GOAL: To catalyze the improved conservation of globally significant biodiversity in Tajikistan through the demonstration of new mechanisms and approaches for effective management of protected areas and natural resources adjacent to them.						S
GOAL/OBJECTIVE/Outcome	Performance Indicator	2006 Baseline	2011 End of Project Target	2011 End of Project Status [#]	Terminal Evaluation Comments	Rating*
PROJECT OBJECTIVE: To strengthen the management effectiveness and sustainability of the three selected protected areas of different types on the southern slopes of the Gissar Mountains, and thereby to provide models and best practices replicable throughout the national PA system.	Improved Management effectiveness of protected areas in Tajikistan	METT scores Current average METT score – 22 for the PA system	METT scores improved by 100% from the baseline average within 10 years post project. NB Indicator changed post MTE from 100% increase by end of project in ProDoc to 100% within 10 years. Latter is more realistic target but not applicable for TE purposes.	Average METT score for 20 PAs is 38 out of potential score of 96 (see Table below). NB This indicator cannot be rated for state of delivery as it was not designed to be met by end of project.	METT scores have increased on average by 42%, which is considered satisfactory progress towards the 10 year target. Increases for pilot sites are much higher (see Outcome 2 below) and significant increases also seen in Muzkul (83% - attributed to inputs from GIZ project), Iskandarkul (157% - attributed to GAAO/GIZ project inputs) and Dashti Djum (83% - attributed to new management plan supported by CAREC) - see Table below.	S
	No further reduction in the total land under conservation management compared with the baseline.	25,100 ha (under PA)	25,100 ha (under PA)	25,100 ha (under PAs)	No change but Presidential Order issued for Shirkent (currently 3,000 ha) to revert to much of its original extent through addition of 28,000 ha. Romit will	S

GOAL/OBJECTIVE/Outcome	Performance Indicator	2006 Baseline	2011 End of Project Target	2011 End of Project Status [#]	Terminal Evaluation Comments	Rating*
		105,500 104,170 ha – surrounding landscape ³⁹ 3,100,000 ha under system level	105,500 104,170 ha – surrounding landscape 3,100,000 ha under system level (the whole PA system in Tajikistan)	102,500 102,400 ha – surrounding landscape (leskhoz). 3,100,000 ha under entire PAs system	officially increase to 16,139 ha, due to changing river course. Total area of 3 PAs will become 50,139 ha. Reduction due to transfer of 1,770 ha leskhoz to private forest under cooperative management in 2008. No change but PAs system will cover 3,502,800 ha once Shirkent extended (additional 28,000 ha), Romit established as 84,000 ha Biosphere Reserve (additional 74,800 ha) and Fanse Mountain NP (300,000 ha) created (as decreed 4 March 2005).	
Outcome 1: Strengthened environmental governance provides a more sustainable land-use context for the PA system	Local policies on sustainable land-use designed and supported by the selected local governments	Policies on sustainable land- use at local level do not exist	Policies on sustainable land- use at local level designed and supported by the selected local governments	Preparation of specific district or jamoat land use policies and plans largely abandoned (post CTA's 2 nd Mission Report in March 2009) in order to focus more on Forest Code and management planning. Land use within non-core areas (under remit of Forestry Agency) in Shirkent NHP and Almosi Zakaznik addressed for next 5 years in management plans.	Project design focussed on strengthening Protected Areas Law (see ProDoc logframe) but during implementation it became apparent that a new Forestry Code (see MTE logframe) was a necessary precursor. Both these instruments needed to be in place ahead of being able to strengthen land use policies at local level. Thus, switch to initial focus on	MS

³⁹ Baseline and End of Project Target values corrected from 105,550 ha to 104,170 ha, based on the following extents of leskhoz: 44,000 ha - Karatog Leskhoz, 9,200 ha - Romit, 15,700 ha – Gissar Leskhoz (2,300 ha belongs to Almosi Zakaznik Gissar) and 33,500 ha – Shahrinav Leskhoz (3,700 ha belongs to Almosi Shahrinav).

GOAL/OBJECTIVE/Outcome	Performance Indicator	2006 Baseline	2011 End of Project Target	2011 End of Project Status#	Terminal Evaluation Comments	Rating*
					Forestry Code, alongside Protected Areas Law, justified.	
	Sustainable land use practices adopted by selected communities and community members	No widely accepted sustainable land-use practices exist	Sustainable land-use practices implemented by selected communities and community members	More sustainable practices tested / demonstrated under Component 3, plus introduction of normative acts related to access and resource use (e.g. visitor access, tree cutting and fuel wood collection, forest management grazing and collection of hay, collection and preparation of medicinal herbs.).	Management plans for 2 PAs (Shirkent and Almosi) provide basis for adopting sustainable land-use practices but demonstration of good practice jeopardised by lack of time to implement plans.	MU
	Amendments to the existing or new versions of the Protected Areas Law and the Forest Code prepared and submitted to the Parliament	New draft of the Protected Areas Law exists but required a thorough revision	New draft prepared, consultations held by mid 2007 The draft law submitted to the Parliament by end of 2007	Draft PAs Law submitted to Lower Chamber of Parliament in April 2011; adopted by Higher Chamber on 30 Nov. 2011; and new <i>Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Specially Protected Natural Areas</i> adopted by Presidential Order #788 on 26 Dec. 2011.	Project instrumental in establishing Working Group of relevant stakeholders (government agencies, biodiversity experts and parliamentarians) to fast-track revision of legislation. Major achievement to have new Forest Code and PAs Law adopted in 2011.	HS
		Current Forest Code of 1993 is considered outdated and needs to be revised	New draft or amendments prepared and consultations held by mid-2007 New draft or amendments submitted to the Parliament by end of 2007	New <i>Forest Code</i> adopted by Parliament in May 2011 and signed by President 2 August 2011.		
Outcome 2: New management practices are introduced and capacity built in target PAs; overall	METT Scores increased in all 3 PA's by the end of yr4 of the project: Shirkent NHP Romit Zapovednik, Almosi	Romit Zapovednik -23 Almosi Zakaznik- 30 Shirkent Natural Historical Park –15	Romit Zapovednik -50 Almosi Zakaznik- 50 Shirkent Natural Historical Park – 50	Romit Zapovednik -48 Almosi Zakaznik- 52 Shirkent Natural Historical Park – 58	Targets met. Increases for pilot sites are much higher than national average of 33%: Almosi = 73%, Romit	S

GOAL/OBJECTIVE/Outcome	Performance Indicator	2006 Baseline	2011 End of Project Target	2011 End of Project Status [#]	Terminal Evaluation Comments	Rating*
management effectiveness and sustainability of the PA system substantively improved					= 109% and Shirkent = 287%, reflecting the value of Project interventions.	
	Financing from state budget for three PAs increased.	3 PAs do not receive full amounts of committed/ requested funds. Romit Zapovednik - 3,641USD (official) actual amount is usually half of the official Almosi Zakaznik - 555 USD (actual) Shirkent Natural Historical park - 4,000 USD (official) actual amount is 926 USD	Increased financing for 3 PAs by the end of the project at least by 50% of the baseline actual amounts	Financing of 3 PA's marginally increased over Project duration but probably this had little direct connection with Project activities (more to do with economic recovery after the war etc). Financial Planning tool introduced as part of management planning. In future, it should help to better justify budgets submitted by CEP to Ministry of Finance. Implementation of activities in management plans should improve the amount and transparency of self-generated funds.	Financial plans completed for Shirkent and under preparation for Almosi but not Romit, partly due to pending Biosphere Reserve designation). Significant milestone achieved by incorporating financial planning within management planning process. Outstanding hurdle is to link financial plans of individual PAs to CEP budget for PAs that is submitted to Ministry of Finance; currently the latter take no account of financial plans.	MS
	Number of households involved and benefiting from alternative livelihoods (for example, forestry management, pastures management, family-based nature tourism, beekeeping, medicinal plant production)	Few / none	At least 20	89 households in four target Jamoats involved in range of income-generating activities. 82 households completed activities and 7 ongoing (see Table 3.6).	Many activities resourced by MLF via JRCs. Little evidence of best practises and know-how having been documented for replication purposes, probably due to time constraints.	S
Outcome 3: Practical examples for stakeholders of how to achieve environmentally sustainable livelihoods around	Number of households with improved energy efficiency (stoves, weatherization)	Little or none	At least 10 households	64 households in four target Jamoats involved in energy improving insulation of their homes and/or installing more efficient stoves for cooking and	Impressive combination of low technology and use of locally available renewable resources for insulating buildings and improving	MS

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GOAL/OBJECTIVE/Outcome	Performance Indicator	2006 Baseline	2011 End of Project Target	2011 End of Project Status [#]	Terminal Evaluation Comments	Rating [*]
target PAs				heating. 54 households completed improvements and 10 ongoing (see Table 3.6).	stoves. Many activities resourced by MLF via JRCs. Works only recently completed, with little/no evidence of technologies having been documented and disseminated by JRCs and other means for promoting and replicating elsewhere.	
	Number of projects on use of alternative energy resources	Little or none	At least 4	5 guest houses in four target Jamoats under construction, based on low carbon footprint and energy efficiency principles. Completion due by end of 2011 (see Table 3.6).	Good initiative to link development of community-based ecotourism (i.e. guest houses) with energy efficient buildings and cooking stoves. Guest houses only just being completed, with no time within project period to demonstrate and develop ecotourism.	MS

Table: Comparison of METT scores between onset (2006) and end (2011) of Project

#	Name of Protected Area	METT Scores			Protected Area Type	Responsible Authority
		2006	2011	% increase/ decrease		
1	Muzkul	18	33	83%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
2	Iskandarkul	14	36	157%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
3	Kusavlisay	26	40	54%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
4	Childukhtaron	24	36	50%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
5	Nurekskii	28	33	18%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
6	Almosi	30	52	73%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
7	CaiVota	20	25	25%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
8	Kamarov	32	28	-13%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
9	DashtiJum	29	53	83%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
10	Aktash	37	38	3%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
11	Zarafshon	18	15	-17%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
12	Karatau	27	27	0%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
13	Sangvor	31	42	35%	Nature Reserve - Zakaznik	Forestry & Hunting Agency
14	Romit	23	48	109%	Strict Nature Reserve - Zapovednik	Protected Area Agency
15	DashtiJum	34	47	38%	Strict Nature Reserve - Zapovednik	Protected Area Agency
16	Zorkul	42	47	12%	Strict Nature Reserve - Zapovednik	Protected Area Agency
17	TigrovayaBalka	28	38	36%	Strict Nature Reserve - Zapovednik	Protected Area Agency
18	Tajik (Pamir)	32	48	50%	National Park	Protected Area Agency
19	Sari Khosor	31	24	-23%	National Park	Protected Area Agency
20	Shirkent	15	58	287%	National Historical Park	Protected Area Agency
N=20	Mean value - all PAs	27	38	42%		
N=13	Mean value - Zakazniks	26	35	37%		
N=4	Mean value - Zapovedniks	32	45	42%		
N=3	Mean value - National Parks	26	43	67%		
N=7	Mean value - all PA agency	29	44	51%		