MONGOLIA

MINISTRY OF NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TERMINAL EVALUATION

Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grasslands of Eastern Mongolia

MON/97/G32 & MON/98/301

Final

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APR	Annual Project Report
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BZ	Buffer Zone
CCF	Community Conservation Fund
DRR	Deputy Resident Representative
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMCAA	Eastern Mongolian Community Conservation Association
EMPAA	Eastern Mongolia Protected Area Administration
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESBP	Eastern Steppe Biodiversity Project (short name for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grasslands of Eastern Mongolia)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF SGP	Global Environment Facility Small Grant Program
GIS	Geographical Information System
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German cooperation agency)
HMEM	Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring
METF	Mongolian Environmental Trust Fund
MNE	Ministry of Nature and Environment
MNT	Mongolian National Tugrug (national currency)
NCP	National Conservation Park
NCV	National Community Volunteers
NEX	National Execution
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NM	Natural Monument
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NPD	National Project Director
NPM	National Project Manager
NR	Natural Reserve
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NUNV	National United Nations Volunteers
PA	Protected Area
PAA	Protected Area Administration
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PRA	Participatory Rural Assessments
SPA	Strictly Protected Area
SSSA	State Specialized Supervision “Inspection” Agency
TPR	Tri-Partite Review
TRAC	Target for Resource Assignment from the Core (UNDP regular funds)
UMENGO	Union of Mongolian Environmental NGOs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDP CO	United Nations Development Program Country Office
UNDP DRR	United Nations Development Program Deputy Resident Representative
UNDP HQ	United Nations Development Program Headquarters
UNOPS	United Nations Operational Program Service
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

A few Mongolian words

Aimag	Province
Soum	County
Bagh	Small rural settlement
Ger	Traditional round felt tent
Dzud	Winter disaster

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Brief description of project

This project was aiming to promote and ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the unique biodiversity in the protected areas and buffer zones of the Eastern Steppe grasslands of Mongolia. A model for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development addressing the priority threats to biodiversity has been applied through a well-defined, target area to be later replicated throughout the Steppe region and other ecological regions of the country and the world.

1.2. Context and purpose of the evaluation

The stated end date for the project was December 2005 and hence MNE and UNDP Mongolia have initiated this evaluation, as agreed at the last TPR in March 2004, to assess the progress of the project in achieving its objectives. The evaluation has to determine to what extent the project has improved environmental planning and management and benefited communities at the local level over the past seven years.

1.3. Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

1.3.1. Most significant achievements of the project

The participatory planning and implementation approach and capacity building at all levels was an especially effective approach to develop stakeholders ownership to the project objectives and to develop sustainable partnerships, cooperation and communication. The project played a strong role of coordination amongst various stakeholders to strengthen the BZ councils and permit the implementation of the BZ Law which was adopted in 1996.

Development of solidarity amongst herders As the CCF grants were provided to community groups, over 1300 individuals from 270 herder families have joined herder communities. According to the herders who were interviewed for the purpose of this evaluation, the creation of herder community groups to implement the CCF projects is a remarkably strong achievement. Because of the low density of the population in the countryside and the individualistic attitude of herders, they say they did not know each other prior to the project intervention. Trough the project and especially the CCF component, they discovered the benefits they could gain through solidarity and collaborating as community groups. The setting up of 22 community-unifying gers or “solidarity palace" was appropriate and especially well adapted to the nomadic lifestyle of herders.

Another great achievement of the project was to link community-based conservation to improved livelihood with well defined community groups who got involved on a voluntary basis in natural resource protection as they learned about the wildlife in their environment and developed a sense of ownership to it. This was accomplished through developing incentives such as alternative income generating activities to improve local people’s livelihood, increasing all stakeholders’ awareness on the importance of conserving biodiversity, their knowledge on biodiversity resources and their awareness of the beauty or their environment beyond its economical value. Examples of this include local people participation in the conservation and monitoring of marmots through contracts formalizing individual responsibilities, in the protection of cranes, of gazelles, and in spring protection through fencing and plantations.

Improvement of the capacity to expose illegal hunting. Another major outcome of this project results from the study on the impact of hunting on wildlife populations in the Eastern *aimags*. As the results of this study were pointing to the lack of enforcement of the Law on Hunting, a project was developed based on a close collaboration of the

SSSA and the ESBP to propose amendments to the Law on Hunting and implement a tagging system to prove that products were hunted legally. The hunting study findings have been used to develop policies and legislation and a new tagging system was successfully implemented in 2003. According to the amendment to the Law on Hunting adopted by the Mongolian Parliament, everyone who possesses a wildlife product is required to have an official certificate of origin to prove that it has been hunted legally. It enables the law enforcement personnel to inspect traders at major road checkpoints, markets, and border ports, and to confiscate products of illegally hunted wildlife. The Director of the Environmental Inspection Department of the SSSA reported that about a hundred thousand marmot skins without tags had been confiscated at traders' warehouses in Ulaanbaatar before being shipped illegally to China.

Ecological control of Brandt's vole populations. The project was successful at understanding the rodent population dynamics in relation to ecological conditions and at applying the findings of the study to devise an ecological approach to control the rodent populations. The approach includes measures to favour its natural predators (ex. construction of bird poles, and bans on fox hunting) and the improvement of pasture management to avoid conditions that lead to rodent populations outbreaks. Local herders participation is fundamental to implement the ecological control of Brandt's voles, and the project was successful at raising their awareness and understanding to promote their active involvement. Now, in the 3 eastern *aimags*, Brandt's voles are no more a problem and the use of Bromadiolone (rodenticide) that was harmful to humans and to the biodiversity in the region has been banned.

Preventive approach for fire management. In order to support the *soums*, more particularly those located in PA Buffer Zones, with capacity building and enhancing public awareness on fire prevention, the ESBP further developed the model *soum* fire management plan initiated by the GTZ fire prevention project and distributed it to the three eastern *aimags* and their *soums* Governor's offices and Land Use agencies. Regional and local capacities to prevent fires have been improved through training programs and workshops for fire departments, civil defense departments, and local governments.

GIS environmental database. The project developed and established a very powerful GIS tool including a comprehensive environmental database and interactive software operating in a Windows environment to access, process, and update databases. Database includes data on biodiversity, illegal activities, and on land use in the eastern region. The project assisted the three eastern *aimag* governments, including their EPAs, SSSAs, Land Agencies, and the EMPAA with the establishment of their environmental databases and has provided training on the use of the GIS software. This support was especially effective to increase the EMPAA and *aimag* capacities for planning purpose and to base decisions on sound scientific knowledge.

Advocacy of biodiversity conservation. The project had a strong influence on high-level decisions. For example, the project contributed to organize the 1st public hearings in the country, to the implementation of the tag system to improve the enforcement of the Law on Hunting, to stopping commercial hunting of gazelles, and to ban marmot and fox commercial hunting for a period of time, and made proposals to create new natural reserves.

1.3.2. Major observations related to the project implementation

As all UNDP projects in Mongolia, this project was implemented under National Execution (NEX) modality. According to the initial implementation arrangement, the national executing agency was the MNE and its agencies, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Hydrometeorology and Environment Monitoring (HMEM). Project

implementation went smoothly until the election of a new government in 2000. This new government did not agree with the project approach, mainly with the capacity-building and research components, fearing that it would not lead to “tangible” results. The contract of the National Project Coordinator was not renewed, and lack of agreement on his replacement left the project without management and coordination at the national level from July 2001 to March 2002. The national execution by the MNE was suspended in 2001 because of lack of common understanding of project’s objectives between executing, implementing and funding agencies. Although UNDP and the project team maintained a stable commitment to the project’s objectives and kept implementing project activities, these problems had an impact on the rate of implementation, slowing down or postponing some of the project’s activities in 2001–2002, until the recruitment of new National Project Coordinator in 2002. This impact includes the delayed recruitment of a technical advisor for the CCF component of the project, which consequently delayed the implementation of this key component which links improvement of local people’s livelihood to biodiversity conservation, which in turn could jeopardize the sustainability of this component’s outcomes.

In July 2003, the UNDP CO received headquarters’ clearance for UNDP direct execution, which was not directly applied on the reasons of best interest of the project and UNDP–Government partnership. Although MNE national execution was suspended, by 2004 the ministry was again involved in the planning process for the approval of annual and quarterly work plans.

The negative impact related to these implementation problems might have been mitigated if a steering committee had been set up for the project. The primary role of a steering committee is to provide policy and overall broad guidance for the project, which would have supported the search for appropriate solutions. Also, as the project design had not envisioned the lack of sustained commitment on the part of the Government as a potential risk, no mitigation or optional measure was identified to deal with the issue.

Throughout this period, the project team maintained its commitment to carry out the activities as planned, in collaboration with international, national and local partners to achieve their work plan targets in protected area and buffer zone management, law and policy lobbying and community livelihood improvement.

1.3.3. Recommendations

Adoption of preliminary management plans according to the adaptive management approach: The fact that the PA management plans were not adopted deprived the country from the use of these essential tools to protect its unique biodiversity in the Eastern Steppes. It might have been advisable to adopt draft versions of the management plans according to the adaptive management principle, while recognizing they are preliminary or uncompleted, while keeping on conducting scientific studies, inventories and consultations to build up the knowledge basis required to improve the management plans to an acceptable level according to recognized international standards. This would have permitted to start implementing the most pressing measures to protect critical habitats for threatened species.

Project management: The implementation of the project must be guided through a logical framework indicating, for each expected outcome (not output), result indicators (limited number and integrated), direct and indirect beneficiaries (with whom result assessment should be conducted), and hypothesis / risks.

The *monitoring* of the progression of activities based on expected targets and outputs, on one side, and the *evaluation* of the level of attainment of expected outcomes and impacts (expected results for immediate and development objectives) on the other side, must be the products of distinct processes, the logical framework

being the appropriate reference document to guide the evaluation of outcomes and impacts.

Coordination and planning of conservation-oriented research: In a context where a lot of basic information is still lacking, such as population size and distribution for threatened or endangered species, and understanding of species critical habitat requirements and mortality factors, research planning must focus rigorously on providing the required information to improve the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation measures. It is necessary to prioritize and concentrate efforts on acquiring the critical knowledge needed to devise appropriate protection measures for the protected area target species or ecosystems, to be able to integrate it in the PA and BZ management plans and in the land use plans for areas outside PAs.

Until now, the project has played a coordination role between national scientific institutions, PA managers, and other stakeholders including local populations, and has provided the needed financial resources. There is a need to further the coordination of research, natural resource management and fund raising to devise a comprehensive integrated research program for the eastern region, and ensure that research findings will answer future priority management needs in terms of knowledge on ecosystems and species, with the purpose of improving measures for conservation or sustainable management on a continuous basis. This coordination could be ensured by resorting to an *ad hoc* or permanent multi-stakeholder advisory committee which composition should include all relevant stakeholders, such as representatives of Governments, private sector, research institutions, ministries, project staff, local populations and associations, national NGOs, and PA managers.

Other: Recommendations include the adoption of the project's exit strategy (section 5.2) and the expansion of positive lessons learned (section 6).

1.3.4. Lessons learned

Establishment of a network of partners. The multi-level partnership strategy adopted by the project to ensure the sustainability of its outcomes proved to be appropriate. It was especially successful at establishing a network of partners at all levels from local herders and communities, buffer zone councils, local governments, to *aimag* administrations, and developing their capacities and sense of ownership over biodiversity and the environment at large. The project was designed to develop the capacities of relevant stakeholders through various training activities and participatory processes and support them in carrying out the activities as their capacities would expand.

Participatory planning and implementation. The participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation involving all relevant project stakeholders, including the 2 project offices, NCVs, staff from EMPAA, EPA, SSSA, , Land Authority, environmental offices in the 3 *aimags*, and implemented in 2002 resulted in a significant improvement of the planning and implementation of activities. It contributed to increase stakeholders' capacities and to shorten the overall planning process. Meetings were successively organized in the eastern three *aimags* and Ulaanbaatar in order to actively involve local partners. Joint evaluation and reporting on work performance and joint planning of activities, allowed building common understanding and consensus amongst project staff and stakeholders which contributed greatly to team building and to improve motivation to implement planned activities. This strong participatory planning definitely contributed to enhance the development of a successful partnership strategy that ensures the sustainability of major project outcomes.

Volunteerism as an outreach strategy to involve and empower local communities and link them to the local governments. The project outreach strategy involving NCVs was highly effective in developing the partnership between the project, local governments and local populations that will contribute to the sustainability of some of the main project outcomes. As NCVs are members of the local communities and members of the BZ Councils, they are most likely to remain in their locality. During the evaluation interviews, they have expressed an eager will to continue to carry out environmental protection actions and spread their knowledge and experience acquired through the project. Some of them have established, on their own initiative, environmental NGOs, with the purpose of pursuing the work they initiated in the project framework, mainly the implementation of the BZ management plans, thereby ensuring the sustainability of, and furthering the project outcomes. This group of local people (NCVs) constitutes a capacity that was developed by the project to establish a missing link between local communities and local governments and agencies, and that will continue to disseminate environmental information and knowledge at the local level. This successful approach deserves to be replicated and expanded for the implementation of similar community-based NRM projects.

Mobile public campaign for remote sparsely populated areas In the Mongolian countryside, the scattering of herders' settlements over vast areas represents a challenge to organize efficient outreach activities and deliver attractive information to local people. Therefore, the project developed a mobile public campaign to reach communities established in remote areas, the Gazelle car being an efficient method to reach people living sparsely over large areas where gathering them is a difficult task.

Steering committee. The establishment of a project steering committee is essential to provide policy guidance and to help solve implementation problems and reduce risks of polarization when problems such as a lack of common understanding of project objectives arise amongst major project partners.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of this terminal evaluation of the "Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grasslands of Eastern Mongolia" project is to evaluate the outcomes of the UNDP operations supported through GEF (MON/97/G32) and UNDP funds (MON/98/301), in order to draw lessons for the development of other programs and projects, in Mongolia and elsewhere.

The stated end date for the project was December 2005 and hence MNE and UNDP Mongolia have initiated this evaluation, as agreed at the last TPR in March 2004, to assess the progress of the project in achieving its objectives. The evaluation aims to determine to what extent the project has improved environmental planning and management and benefited communities at the local level over the past seven years. The evaluation has reviewed the operations of the entire project in the Eastern Region and in Ulaanbaatar.

This evaluation was undertaken in conjunction with an Outcome Evaluation of the Energy and Environment Programme of UNDP, which provides an analysis of the broader performance of UNDP.

2.2. Key issues addressed

The key issues addressed by the evaluation, as stated in the terms of reference (Annex 1), are the following:

- Assessment of the project's attainment of global environmental objectives, outcomes/impacts, project objectives, and delivery and completion of project outputs/activities.
- Assessment of the management of protected areas supported by the project by a GEF introduced "Tracking Tools".
- Analysis of main findings, lessons learned and extraction of best practices.
- Assessment of the partnership strategy: Adequacy of the support provided to the project by the UNDP country office, the MNE including the Eastern Mongolia Protected Area Administration (EMPAA) and *aimag* governments.
- Analysis of national and local policies with regard to conservation and development and of the contribution made by the project for long-term conservation, including factors beyond the control of the project that may have impeded successful implementation.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of project inputs such as training, public awareness campaigns, sub-contracts, personnel and equipment.
- Future options of assistance by GEF and UNDP in the Eastern Steppes to strengthen and augment the work done by this project (exit strategy).
- Review of establishment of the Mongolian Environmental Trust Fund (METF) and contributions of stakeholders (additional issue as requested).

2.3. Methodology of the evaluation

The project's achievements are evaluated according to the GEF Project Review Criteria: Implementation approach; country ownership/driveness, stakeholder participation/public involvement, sustainability, replication approach, financial planning, cost-effectiveness and monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation concentrates on assessing the project's achievements and shortcomings regarding outcomes and two of the GEF Project Review Criteria: sustainability and project monitoring and evaluation systems, and provides ratings for these three areas according to the six value system: highly satisfactory (HS), satisfactory (S), moderately satisfactory (MS), moderately unsatisfactory (MU), unsatisfactory (U) and highly unsatisfactory (HU).

The followings tasks are undertaken to carry out the evaluation:

1. Review background documents in the project files (See Annex 4 for a list of documents reviewed)
2. Locate and review additional documentation regarding the policy environment
3. Interviews stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project to collect their views on the policy environment and the implementation of the project (See Annex 3 for a list of persons interviewed)
4. Site visits to the Eastern Steppes Region (Dornod, Khentii and Sukhbaatar *aimags*) to review additional documentation and conduct additional interviews. (See Annex 2 for the itinerary of the field visits)
5. Meet with project staff in Choibalsan to receive a general briefing on conservation and development in the Eastern Steppes and meet also with and interview representatives of the following organizations:
    a. Governments of Dornod, Khentii and Sukhbaatar
    b. Protected Area Administration of the Eastern Steppes
    c. Community Conservation Fund beneficiaries
6. Assessment of PA management with the GEF Tracking Tool.

To guide the interviews with stakeholders and the collection of relevant information, a table was prepared, indicating for each project outcome, intended beneficiaries, indicators, source of information, method for data collection and data location. The table is presented in Annex 5.

The evaluation of this project was carried out jointly with the mid-term evaluation of another project, and UNDP Energy and Environment Outcome Evaluation, and was allocated a total of 25 working days between November 2005 and January 2006. The evaluation team consisted of two members: one independent international consultant and team leader, Dr Dominique ROBY and one independent national consultant, Dr KHULDORJ Balganjav.

3. THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

3.1. Project start and its duration

The project effectively started in June 1998. Planned duration was 7 years to which a 6 months extension was added. Therefore, the actual termination date was the end of December 2005.

3.2. Problems that the project seeks to address

Temperate grasslands are generally disappearing in the world and have already been irretrievably altered in countries adjacent to Mongolia. Mongolia is known for its huge expanse of temperate grassland covering most of the eastern part of the country, including Dornod and Sukhbaatar *aimags* and parts of Khentii *aimag*. The Eastern Steppe is one of the last temperate grasslands with an abundance of rare and threatened species, including many endangered mammals and birds. A number of important wildlife of the Eastern Steppe are listed as rare, very rare, or endangered in International and National Red Data Books. This ecosystem is home to about 300,000 to 500,000 Mongolian gazelles which undertake large-scale annual migrations across the steppes. These migrations have been cut-off by the construction of the Ulaanbaatar – Beijing railroad and the sustainable management of this species is further hampered by the lack of knowledge about its population dynamics.

The eastern region of the country has plenty of resources of rangeland, haymaking fields, and is rich in mineral resources including oil, coal, mixed metals, zinc and gold. Thus a number of big development projects that could adversely impact on the environmental state of the region can be proposed and implemented as the region is being a part of Tumen River economic development program. Therefore much particular attention needs to be paid to its conservation and reduction and elimination of potential impacts. With this purpose, the project has aimed to bring and direct attitudes and approaches of local communities and governments toward environmentally sound practices.

More specifically, the project attempted to address major threats or constraints to biodiversity conservation which were identified through consultations with local communities, government officials in the Eastern *aimags* and central government officials in Ulaanbaatar:

- Inadequate mechanisms to sustain and replicate biodiversity conservation in the Steppe Ecosystem
- Increasing land degradation
- Illegal hunting of mammals
- Increasing frequency of wildfires

- Overexploitation of fuelwood and medicinal plants
- Potentially negative impact of proposed industrial development
- Indiscriminate use of pesticide and aerial application

3.3. Immediate and development objectives of the project

Development objective

Promote and ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the protected areas and buffer zones of the Eastern Mongolian grassland ecosystem, and incorporate biodiversity considerations into development planning for the Eastern Steppe.

Immediate objectives

1. To ensure that the management of the seven existing protected areas in the Eastern Steppe is strengthened for effective protection of critical biodiversity within them.
2. To support biodiversity conservation and sustainable alternative livelihoods in the buffer zones of the protected areas.
3. To incorporate and internalize components of biodiversity conservation into provincial and local development plans, so as to ensure the sustainability of activities and provide institutional frameworks for the replication of these initiatives. To support general measures for the long-term sustainability of all these efforts.

3.4. Main stakeholders

Main stakeholders include beneficiaries, implementation partners, and donor agencies.

Target beneficiaries:

- Local herders, with a focus on buffer zone herders
- Local people in *soum* centers
- *Aimag* and *soum* governors and agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agencies, the State Specialized Inspection Agencies, the Hydrometeorological and Environmental Monitoring Centers, and the Eastern Mongolian Protected Area Administration

Implementation partners:

- Eastern Mongolian Protected Area Administration and MNE as a representative of the Mongolian Government
- Mongolian scientific institutions
- National NGOs

Donor agencies: GEF, UNDP, Finland (UNVs), Norway (contributor to METF), US Peace Corps (1 volunteer).

3.5. Results expected

According to the project document, the following results relative to each immediate objective were expected at the end of the project:

1. Ensure the efficient management on Protected Areas (7) in the eastern region

- Management plans finalized and implemented for all protected areas (SPAs, NRs and National Monument) in the three *aimags* of the Eastern Region;
- Capacity of the PAA staff enhanced (training and equipment) for the effective implementation of the PA management plans and on targeted research and monitoring of resource use;
- Long-term monitoring and inventory systems established, including a GIS capability;
- Action-oriented medium-term research sub-contracts covering targeted research topics critically relevant to project implementation commissioned to support the management of the protected areas.

2. Assist and support the biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihood in Protected Areas and their Buffer Zones

- Buffer zone management committees established for each of the protected areas;
- Capacity of the buffer zone management committees for planning and managing the buffer zones strengthened through training, participatory rural assessments (PRAs) and participatory planning, and on targeted research and monitoring of resource use;
- Community buffer zone management plans implemented for fire prevention and afforestation;
- Full implementation of the community management plans by the local people through coordination with other projects and on-going activities.

3. Incorporate the biodiversity conservation into the regional development planning and ensure the sustainability of biodiversity in the region

- *aimag* and *soum* level government administration officials trained,
- Biodiversity conservation incorporated into land use, zoning and general development plans for both the *aimag* and *soum* levels through workshops and targeted surveys of biodiversity hotspots,
- Increased public awareness at the *aimag* and *soum* levels on biodiversity conservation.

In addition, in order to strengthen, sustain and replicate these results, it was expected that:

- Effective coordination be achieved with other projects and government agencies through yearly workshops,
- Existing environmental laws relative to biodiversity conservation be amended and new ones developed,
- A system of incentives be incorporated into laws and regulations,
- A study and regional workshop be conducted on illegal hunting of highly mobile mammal species,
- Four one-year training programmes and two overseas Masters training programmes be completed early in the project cycle, to allow the trainees to return and assist the project,

Finally, it was expected that GEF funds would have been added to other co-financing to capitalize the biodiversity account in the Mongolia Environmental Trust Fund, eventually allowing the replication and long-term support for the protection of biodiversity in the Eastern Steppe.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1. Project performance according to GEF criteria

4.1.1. Implementation approach

Logical framework use

No logical framework was elaborated for this project, although the project document identified development and immediate objectives, expected project outcomes, and indicators as well as risks and assumptions. Therefore the major elements of a logical framework were available to conduct evaluations.

Partnerships in implementation of the project activities

The project established multiple partnerships with national and international institutional or individual stakeholders to achieve jointly agreed or common objectives. Partners have cooperated with the project through in kind or financial contributions or have been subcontracted to provide services or achieve some of the project's activities.

1. At the national level, the main project partner was the MNE as its executing agency. The elections in 2000 disrupted this important partnership as the new team designated within the MNE did not subscribe to the project's objectives and approach.
2. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring Agency (HMEM) of the MNE were the project's implementing agencies. The first project NPD from 1998 to 2000 was Director of the EPA of the MNE.
3. Research activities were conducted through subcontracts awarded to the following national institutions:
   - Institute of Biology, Mongolian Academy of Science
   - Institute of Botany, Mongolian Academy of Science
   - Biological Faculty, National University of Mongolia
   - State Pedagogical University
   - Red Deer Conservation Society
   - Mongolian Marmot Society
   - Information and Computer Center
4. National workshops were organized in collaboration with WWF, GTZ, ADB, Agency of Land Affairs and Geodesy Cartography and the Union of Mongolian Environmental NGOs to develop policies and laws, share research results and experiences, conduct trainings, improve transboundary conservation, integrate biodiversity conservation into land use plans, and devise a strategy to maintain the integrity of the protected areas.
5. The implementation of the recommendations resulting from the hunting study conducted by the project was achieved through a subcontract to the EPA and the SSSA. The cooperation agreement with the EPA and later with the SSSA, to take measures to prevent illegal hunting through improved legislation and policy, included *i*) the development of a regulation to use the tagging system, *ii*) the establishment of an anti-poaching unit, *iii*) the publication of a hunter's newsletter, *iv*) the training of environmental inspectors, *v*) the improvement of inter-agency coordination to control wildlife product trade, and *vi*) coordination with relevant agencies to develop international transboundary cooperation.

6. At the local level, the project has worked at several institutional levels, working directly with

   - the Eastern Mongolia Protected Area Administration (EMPAA), as its local counterpart agency, to develop the protected areas management plans, buffer zone management plans, organize trainings, conduct field studies, monitoring and inventory of the protected areas resources, conduct public awareness activities in the buffer zones and urban areas;
   - the EPA and SSSA to conduct training for *soum* and *aimag* environmental inspectors, and carry out hunting study;
   - HMEM centers of each *aimag*, to develop grassland monitoring methodology, and subcontract research projects,
   - all three *aimag* governments, and *soum* and *bag* governors, to develop and implement land use and PA and buffer zone management plans, implement sustainable grassland management activities in order to control Brandt's Vole populations, conduct the hunting study, improve public awareness on biodiversity conservation, develop their capacity to improve environmental protection and management, and implement the Community Conservation Fund (CCF) activities.

   Meetings for the participatory preparation of work plans were successively organized in the eastern three *aimags* and Ulaanbaatar in order to actively involve local partners in the project annual and quarterly planning processes. This strong participatory planning definitely contributed to enhance the development of a successful partnership strategy that ensures the sustainability of major project outcomes.

7. The project was successful at getting local people actively involved in the implementation of its activities. The key mediators between the project and the local population were the National Community Volunteers (NCV). These volunteers were recruited from the locations where the project was carrying out its activities, initially hired for 2 years as United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) through the UNV programme. The project invested a great deal of effort to develop their capacities and enable them i) to disseminate project information and results to local governments and communities with the purpose of integrating the project activities at the local level, ii) to conduct public awareness activities on a regular basis, iii) to gather socioeconomic and biodiversity data, iv) to support the local implementation of project's activities, and v) to help develop PA and Buffer Zone (BZ) management plans. At the end of the 2 years (maximal hiring period for UNVs) the project decided to hire them as NCVs. Their role was then focused on the implementation of CCF activities.

   This outreach strategy was highly effective in developing the partnership between the project, local governments and local populations that will contribute to the sustainability of some of the main project outcomes. As NCVs are members of the local communities and members of the BZ Councils, they are most likely to remain in their locality. During the evaluation interviews, they have expressed eagerness and will to continue to carry out environmental protection actions and spread their knowledge and experience acquired through the project. Some of them have established, on their own initiative, environmental NGOs, with the purpose of pursuing the work they initiated in the project framework, mainly the implementation of the BZ management plans, thereby ensuring the sustainability of, and furthering the project outcomes. This group of local people (NCVs) constitutes a capacity that was developed by the project to establish a missing link between local communities and local governments and agencies, and that will continue to disseminate environmental information and knowledge at the local

level. This successful approach deserves to be replicated and expanded for the implementation of similar community-based NRM projects.

8. Buffer Zone Councils have been important partners to reach the project outcome related to the development of sustainable alternative livelihoods and biodiversity conservation in the PA buffer zones. Buffer Zone Councils are participatory management committees elected for each BZ, whose responsibility is to elaborate, monitor and execute the management plans of the PA buffer zones. These structures include representatives of local herders, local governments, and PA administration. The project has supported their establishment, contributed to develop their capacity for participatory planning, implementation of the buffer zone management plans, and monitoring of resource use.

Overall project management

The project was implemented in 34 *soums*, 3 *aimags* (Dornod, Sukhbaatar, and Khentii) and 9 Protected Areas.

Project offices and staff. Until June 2005, the project was run from two offices, one in the capital city Ulaanbaatar and one in the main urban center of the region where the project activities were carried out. The headquarter office in Ulaanbaatar was in charge of planning, development of a training program at the national level, collaboration with MNE and other counterpart agencies, including UNDP CO, evaluation of activities at the regional level and reporting to the National government, GEF and UNDP. Initially, the headquarter office consisted of 5 staff: national project coordinator, administrative assistant, accountant, translator, and driver.

The field office, set up in Choibalsan, Dornod *aimag*, was in charge of most decisions related to the implementation of activities, identification of research needs, implementation of planned activities with local partners, development of PA management and buffer zone plans, public awareness, most training activities and decision-making regarding the allocation of the Community Conservation Fund (CCF).

The field office staff consisted of an international senior biodiversity advisor (4.5 years), a project manager, 2 UNVs from Finland, 5 national specialists (biodiversity, grassland, public awareness, land use, and GIS), administrative assistant, translator, 9 national volunteers based in the buffer zone *soums* and *aimag* center, and 3 drivers. In 2000, the terms of reference for all national specialists, except for the GIS specialist, were revised and duty station was changed to Ulaanbaatar, except for GIS and land use specialists who remained in Choibalsan.

In the beginning of 2003, an international community development advisor was recruited as well as a national community conservation fund manager to be posted in Choibalsan to implement the CCF activities. A policy and planning officer was also recruited in Ulaanbaatar.

Management. Every quarter, meetings were held with the project local stakeholders to evaluate the preceding quarter and plan activities and budgets for the next quarter. Quarterly and annual work plans were then prepared following this participatory approach involving the relevant stakeholders, more particularly so after the arrival of the new NPC in 2002. Work plans were submitted along with the corresponding budgets – to the NPD for the period when NEX modalities were followed – and directly to UNDP when the project was under direct execution. During this direct execution period (from 2001), the signatories for the expenses of the project headquarters in Ulaanbaatar were the NPC and the UNDP DRR who had to approve work plans, budgets and expenses. UNDP was providing quarterly advances on the basis of the approved work plan and budget. In 2004, the NPD was reinstated and the work plans had to be reviewed and get the approval of the NPD at MNE. UNDP

CO retained the financial approval of expenses and monitoring of the project management.

Steering Committee. No Steering Committee was set up for the project.

METF All activities related to the establishment of the METF and associated governance bodies were under the direct responsibility of the MNE and UNDP CO.

Changes in project design

The 2003 TPR agreed that only the Numrug SPA management plan would be implemented as a model, thereby modifying the expected results regarding the implementation of all PA management plans. The objective was deemed unrealistic as baseline data had to be collected for 2 additional PAs and budgetary requirements to implement management plans had been underestimated.

Adequacy of the intervention strategy

The multi-level intervention strategy adopted by the project to ensure the sustainability of its outcomes proved to be appropriate. It was especially successful at establishing a network of partners at all levels from local herders and communities, buffer zone councils, local governments, to *aimag* administrations, and developing their capacities and sense of ownership over biodiversity and the environment at large. The project was designed to develop the capacities of relevant stakeholders through various training activities and participatory processes and support them in carrying out the activities as their capacities would expand.

The project had planned to improve conservation and management of existing protected areas to reach internationally accepted standards, and to prevent biodiversity loss through reducing threats, given the relative good condition of the Eastern Steppe. The Numrug PAA has taken complete responsibility for protected area and buffer zone management from the beginning. Although the other PA management plans could not be implemented, the EMPAA has been trained and equipped, and will be able to take over the implementation of the PA management plans as they will be adopted.

As the participatory pre-project analysis of threats to biodiversity in the Eastern Steppe had shown clear links to poverty, the project applied itself to link biodiversity conservation in the protected areas, and sustainable livelihood improvement in their buffer zones. The project raised public awareness on the importance of biodiversity conservation through multiple approaches. It helped to establish representative buffer zone councils in line with the Law on Buffer Zones, in order to develop BZ management plans following a participatory approach, and develop alternative livelihood options with the support of a community conservation fund (CCF). Unfortunately, due to the late implementation of the CCF activities to develop livelihood options (the CCF was established and started to fund community projects in 2002), it was difficult to assess their effect in terms of reduction of threats to biodiversity.

Yet, it was also recognized that a sole emphasis on protected areas and their buffer zones was not sufficient to ensure sustainability of the benefits and reduction of threats and constraints. Therefore, the project contributed to develop capacities and institutional frameworks at both *soum* and *aimag* levels to ensure biodiversity conservation both in and out of the protected areas. The project ensured the integration of biodiversity conservation in the *aimag* and *soum* government development plans in Eastern Mongolia by providing appropriate training, tools, databases, models, and support to local government and agencies.

The project also counted on the formal recognition of the communal property rights of specifically defined local communities to provide the necessary incentive to the local

residents to enact and respect regulations on biodiversity conservation. In November 2005, the Parliament adopted a series of amendments to the Environmental Protection Law. One of the key changes is that local people, as community groups, are given the right to use and possess natural resources in specific areas, make benefits from their use, at the same time the obligation to protect these resources from fire, illegal logging, and illegal hunting is transferred to them. The outcomes expected by the Government in adopting these amendments are that these specific areas will be better protected and that local people livelihood will be improved through the sustainable use of natural resources.

The Mongolia Environmental Trust Fund, established under the Pilot Phase Project supported by UNDP, needed additional seed money and to attract more donors in order to become fully functional to provide a sustainable financing mechanism for biodiversity conservation initiatives. However, the activities related to these objectives were outside the project's direct competence.

4.1.2. Country Ownership/Driveness

Consistency with national environmental and development agenda and with national/sectoral development plans

Throughout the duration of its implementation, the project remained consistent with national environmental priorities and development plans as stated in the successive Government Action Programmes and other policy documents.

National priorities for environmental protection, at the time the project was developed and launched, are stated in the Government Action Programme for the period 1996 to 2000. A chapter on environmental and scientific policy (Chapter 3) though limited to a few broad intentions, included concerns for improvement of land management, improvement of patrolling and environmental protection in line with regional socioeconomic development policies, and development conservation measures for endangered flora and fauna species in Mongolia. The project has addressed all these concerns and expanded them further.

The overall objective of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is to implement measures to protect biodiversity, to restore damaged areas and to ensure that consciousness of biodiversity is integrated into economic and social development programmes. ESBP implemented activities in Eastern Mongolia corresponding fully or partially to 11 out of the 17 high priorities that were identified in the BAP.

Also, the Mongolian Action Programme for the 21st Century – known as MAP-21 – adopted by the Government in 1998, has identified objectives related to sustainable development of agriculture, use and protection of land resources, development of protected areas, and protection of biological diversity. The project is in line with numerous activities listed under these objectives in MAP-21, namely

- sustainable use of pastures to contribute to their protection,
- promotion of management and rational use of land resources taking into account the interests of local populations and environmental resources,
- production of comprehensive maps including information on land quality and utilization, soil and vegetation,
- development of the BZ of protected areas as models of sustainable development,
- promotion of sustainable use of natural resources within their natural carrying capacity,
- extensive involvement of local inhabitants of the BZ of the PAs in protection and planning activities, and providing support to solve their social problems,
- establishment of training centers in the PAs and public environmental education,
- determination of the causes of the decline of some species,

- intensive monitoring of hunting and fishing,
- creation of an information system on fauna, flora and forests,
- intensification of activities aiming at assisting the recovery of endangered species, and creation of conditions to improve their natural reproduction,
- use of environment-friendly methods to combat rodents and insects,
- public education on the importance of biodiversity.

The project remained closely related to the national objectives stated in the Nature and Environment Policy section of the Government action programme for 2000 to 2004, especially the following ones: i) aim to utilize rationally and rehabilitate natural resources with due consideration to their capacity to ensure an eco-oriented economic growth, ii) precisely define civil rights and responsibilities related to the utilization and protection of local natural resources, and iii) create a mechanism for nature and environment protection by the citizen themselves - including an intensification of efforts to combat pests and rodents by introducing eco-friendly technologies and increasing the land surface for combating Brandt's voles.

Outcomes incorporation into national / regional development plans and policies

1. The project cooperated with the Standing Committee on Environmental and Rural Development, State Great Khural (Parliament), GTZ, and WWF to develop a proposal on amendments to the set of environmental laws, which has been submitted to the parliament for consideration. The amendments to the Law on Environmental Protection have been adopted in November 2005. The amendments to the Law on Forests and to the Law on Protection from Toxic Chemicals were expected to be submitted in the next spring session.
2. The project has organized or contributed to workshops and conferences to discuss research results and specific issues with stakeholders in order to improve the implementation of existing laws or to devise resolutions aiming at protecting the environment and natural resources, notably gazelles and marmots. As a result, the Government (MNE) passed resolutions to ban commercial hunting of gazelle in 2000, commercial and subsistence hunting of marmot for 3 years in 2004, and timber export.
3. In 2003, the project assisted the MNE to carry out a public hearing to discuss the findings of the EIA on the construction of the Numrug Bridge, and a national forum was organized to discuss legal and administrative status of the PAs in Mongolia. As a result of the public hearing and the national forum, the Parliament made the decision to refuse any proposal on declassifying existing PA. All proposals for declassification of existing PA were denied. With the project's direct input, an amendment to the Law on EIA to improve the impact of the public hearings was proposed for the Parliament adoption through the Parliament Standing Committee on Environment and Rural Development.
4. One of the major outcomes of this project results from the study on the impact of hunting on wildlife populations in the Eastern *aimags*. As the results of this study were pointing to the lack of enforcement of the Law on Hunting, a project was developed based on a close collaboration of the SSSA and the ESBP to propose amendments to the Law on Hunting and implement a tagging system to prove that products were hunted legally. The hunting study findings have been used to develop policies and legislation and the new tagging system has been successfully implemented since 2003. According to the amendment to the Law on Hunting adopted by the Mongolian Parliament, everyone who possesses a wildlife product is required to have an official certificate of origin to prove that it has been hunted legally. It enables the law enforcement personnel to inspect traders at

major road checkpoints, markets, and border ports, and to confiscate products of illegally hunted wildlife.

5. One of the management-oriented research projects increased the understanding of the Brandt's vole ecology and identified ecological measures to control the population levels. The project organized a successful international conference in association with WCS and WWF-Mongolia during which the MFA agreed to the recommendation to phase out the use of Bromadiolone by 2005. Also, the MNE imposed a ban on hunting red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and corsac fox (*Vulpes corsac*), natural Brandt's vole predators, in the three eastern *aimags*.

6. The Eastern Regional Action Programme for 2003 to 2020, in its section on Biodiversity Conservation, integrates a number of actions that are clearly stemming from the project outcomes, such as:

   - incorporation of biodiversity issues into *soum* land use planning,
   - adoption of comprehensive measures to counter illegal actions such as poaching of wildlife,
   - taking Mongolian gazelle main habitats and range in the eastern *aimags* under state protection,
   - wide organization of training and public awareness activities on the importance of protecting biodiversity using information centers,
   - implementation of alternative livelihood projects in the PA buffer zones.

7. The Nature and Environment Policy of the Government Action Programme for 2000 to 2004 announces the Government's intention to intensify efforts to combat rodents by introducing eco-friendly technology and increase by 1.5 times the area where Brandt's vole control will be implemented.

8. Local level policies: The Economic and Environment policy of the 2004–2008 Governor's Action Program for Dornod *aimag* plans

   - to implement environmental and biodiversity conservation activities of MAP-21,
   - to prohibit marmot hunting for 2 to 3 years and to reintroduce marmots in specific soums,
   - to establish new protected areas for gazelle reproduction and for the protection of endangered water birds.

Government approval of policies in line with the project objectives

In November 2005, the Parliament adopted a series of amendments to the Environmental Protection Law. These amendments provide a legal recognition of the delegation of rights and responsibilities to community user groups "*to increase the public participation in the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of natural resources, and monitoring activities*".

One of the key changes is that local people, as community groups, are given the right to use and possess natural resources in specific areas, make benefits from their use; at the same time the obligation to protect these resources from fire, illegal logging, and illegal hunting is transferred to them. The outcomes expected by the Government in adopting these amendments are that these specific areas will be better protected and that local people livelihood will be improved through the sustainable use of natural resources.

Involvement of country representatives in project identification / planning / implementation / monitoring and evaluation

The identification and formulation of the project proposal has benefited from substantial input from a participatory consultative process which included national, *aimag* and *soum* government officials.

These consultations have led to a comprehensive listing of potential proximate causes for biodiversity loss in the Eastern Steppe. The outputs and activities of the project are addressing specific threats and constraints to biodiversity conservation.

The involvement of country representatives in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project is addressed jointly with public involvement in the section 4.1.3 on stakeholder participation.

Government financial commitment to the project

The government financial commitment was calculated as a total of US$ 1.35 million in kind. This commitment included providing adequate office space for project staff in Ulaanbaatar and in Choibalsan ($208,920), fuel and maintenance ($168,000), salaries ($717,800) for part-time or full time involvement of regional coordinator, 3 *aimag* governors, 35 sum governors, 5 Environmental Inspectors, 3 *aimag* Heads of Plan, 140 *bag* governors, Dornod PAA staff, and equipment and operations for MNE and PAA operations ($260,200).

Actually, office space was provided for project staff in Ulaanbaatar and in Choibalsan, as well as for NUNVs in their respective locations until 2001. Providing adequate office space should have included heating and electricity, repairs/maintenance and cleaning. In 2001, the Government stopped fulfilling its commitment to the project regarding the provision of office space as the MNE was no longer the National Executing Agency of the project. Afterwards, the rent for the Ulaanbaatar and Choibalsan offices was supported by the project budget.

Although the government had pledged to contribute US$ 700,000 in cash to the METF, due to restricted financial resources, the total Government contribution made in 2000, was limited to US$ 50,000.

4.1.3. Public involvement

Information dissemination

The project has adopted a broad and diverse strategy to get local communities and other stakeholders actively involved in the pursuit of its objectives, through raising their awareness on the importance of conserving biodiversity and protecting the environment. Various means were developed to convey different messages to people belonging to different age classes, living in different locations, and having different interests.

NCV National UNVs (later as NCVs) have been key actors to ensure the dissemination of project's results and information through monthly visits to local communities in the BZ and through their membership to the BZ council.

Information centers 4 information centers have been set up by the project before the start of the CCF projects (3 in *soum* centers and one in Choibalsan). Later, with funding from the CCF, 17 information centers were established in *soum* centers and 22 gers were set up as "solidarity palace" in the countryside. The purpose of the information centers was to display information and education material to local people and to provide a space where different trainings related to environmental protection could be organized. The information centers that were established in the countryside with CCF funding were more useful as a gathering place for people to hold meetings for social or environmental protection purposes.

Gazelle car In the Mongolian countryside, the scattering of herders' settlements over vast areas represents a challenge to organize efficient outreach activities and deliver attractive information to local people. Therefore, the project developed a mobile public campaign to reach communities established in remote areas, the Gazelle car

being an efficient method to reach people living dispersed over large areas where gathering them was difficult.

Environmental clubs The project helped establish environmental clubs for school children in 3 *soum* centers and one in Choibalsan with the purpose of promoting environmental education and building their awareness on environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.

Publications

- Guide books on fish, reptiles and amphibians, and common plants based on the results of research projects,
- Booklets on natural resources and history of each *aimag* "Khentii *aimag* Natural History Booklet" "Dornod *aimag* Natural History Booklet",
- Teacher's manual on ecological principles – the first in the country – displaying examples from Mongolia, produced and used for training biology and ecology teachers,
- Eastern Steppe Ecosystem Scientific Journal, published once,
- "Hunting Newsletter" was published once, and 8000 copies were distributed to target populations of herders living near or within the BZ of PA in the eastern *aimags* and in other places in Mongolia where marmots were occurring. This newspaper was highly appreciated from local herders, and SSSA and local governments requested for further issues, which was beyond project financial resources budgeted for information and communication,
- Series of posters showing mammals, birds, rare species in Eastern Mongolia, ecological theory for school teachers, posters and brochures displaying protected areas,
- Findings of a research on climate change in Eastern Mongolia, based on the statistical analysis of 60 years of meteorological data, have been compiled in a book "Eastern *aimag* Climate" and distributed to local officials in the three eastern *aimags*.

Broadcasting Regular radio and television programs were broadcasted in the eastern region on wildlife species, notably migrating birds, in the Eastern Steppes, on project activities and results, on the tagging system and the amendments to the Law on Hunting, and educational programs on endangered species. Videos on wildlife of Eastern Mongolia were distributed to national and local television companies, and to high schools in the Eastern *aimags*.

Consultation and stakeholder participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of program activities

Project identification The identification and formulation of the project proposal has benefited from substantial input from extensive consultations with local communities in the Eastern Steppe, PA directors and managers, *aimag* and *soum* administration officials, environmental inspectors, MNE, UNDP Country Office and UNDP/GEF, local private businessmen, national NGOs, and on-going projects and programmes. The formulation mission conducted Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) with several herder households in the Eastern Region.

These consultations have led to a comprehensive listing of potential proximate causes for biodiversity loss in the Eastern Steppe and identified priority threats to biodiversity and project target areas. The outputs and activities of the project addressing these specific threats and constraints to biodiversity conservation have also been identified through the same consultation process with all stakeholders.

Planning, implementation and evaluation A considerable emphasis has been put on local level participation, and adequate budgets have been planned to carry out

participatory workshops to plan and evaluate project activities. Institutional stakeholders have been involved at all levels in the planning and implementation of the project activities:

- the Eastern Mongolia Protected Area Administration, to develop the protected areas management plans, buffer zone management plans, organize trainings, conduct field studies, monitoring and inventory of the protected areas resources, conduct public awareness activities in the buffer zones and urban areas;
- the EPA to conduct training for *soum* and *aimag* environmental inspectors, and carry out hunting study;
- HMEM centers of each province, to develop grassland monitoring methodology, subcontract research projects,
- all three *aimag* governments, and *soum* and *bag* governors, to develop and implement land use, PA and BZ management plans, implement sustainable grassland management activities in order to control Brandt's Vole populations, conduct the hunting study, improve public awareness on biodiversity conservation, develop their capacity to improve environmental protection and management, and implement the CCF activities.

Stakeholder participation is largely ensured through the Buffer Zone Councils which are participatory structures including representatives of local herders, local governments, and PA administration. The project has supported their establishment according to the Law on Buffer Zones, contributed to develop their capacity for participatory planning, implementation of the buffer zone management plans, and monitoring of resource use. BZ Councils had the responsibility of planning, monitoring and executing the BZ management plans following a participatory approach, and of developing alternative livelihood options with the support of a community conservation fund (CCF).

National UNVs (later as NCVs) have been key actors to ensure the consultation and participation of local stakeholders. They were employed by the project as outreach agents, living and working with the local communities, and were trained to raise communities' awareness on biodiversity issues and provide the necessary support to ensure the participation of local communities.

Participatory planning and evaluation Every quarter, meetings were held with the project local stakeholders to evaluate the preceding quarter and plan activities and budgets for the next quarter. Quarterly and annual work plans were prepared following this approach with the participation of the relevant stakeholders. Planning meetings were successively organized in the eastern three *aimags* and Ulaanbaatar in order to actively involve local partners in the project annual and quarterly evaluation and planning processes. This strong participatory planning definitely contributed to enhance the development of a successful partnership strategy that ensures the sustainability of major project outcomes.

Establishment of partnerships between various program stakeholders

Local agencies and local populations The project fostered the establishment of a wide partnership between *aimag* and *soum* agencies and local populations. This aspect has been developed under section 4.1.1 on "Partnerships in implementation of the project activities".

Buffer Zone Councils 5 BZ councils have been established and trained in participatory planning, implementation of the buffer zone management plans, and monitoring of resource use with the project support. Buffer Zone Councils are participatory management committees elected for each BZ, whose responsibility is to elaborate, monitor and execute the management plans of the PA buffer zones and to

develop alternative livelihood options with the support of the community conservation fund (CCF). These structures include representatives of local herders, local governments, and PA administration.

Volunteerism in the local communities The voluntary involvement of civilians in environmental protection activities to support action undertaken by their local governments is definitely a strong outcome of this project. This illustrates the sense of ownership and responsibility that local populations developed over their environment and natural resources which made a positive shift in people's behavior and attitude, and which should greatly contribute to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Eastern Mongolia.

Volunteer rangers enrolled in the anti-poaching units run by the local offices of the SSSA. Training and equipment provided by the project enables them to help out to local environmental inspectors and local governments for the monitoring of natural resources and for patrolling activities, thus contributing to improve to enforce laws in the Eastern *aimags*. Over 20 volunteer patrolling teams have been established and have benefited some funds for their operations.

Volunteer fire-fighting units, trained and equipped by the project or by their *soum*, are partners to the local governments to prevent and reduce the occurrence and extent of wild fires.

EMPAA and *aimag* government The project helped to promote a better communication between EMPAA and Dornod *aimag* government, especially after the public hearing on the bridge issue in the Numrug PA where the EMPAA was able to defend its stakes, partly due to capacity building with the project support; a more consistent consultation was established between them

Research institutions and PAA No long-term partnership (beyond the project life) was established between research institutions and PAA to ensure the scientific input in the definition of research needs to improve PA management plans, in inventories of PA natural resources, and in monitoring the evolution of ecosystem dynamics throughout the implementation of PA and BZ management plans.

Commitments towards local stakeholders honoured

The steady progress made by the project team despite the execution problems that arose as from 2001 ensured that commitments towards stakeholders could be met for the most part.

Such commitments included developing capacities of the various stakeholders - *aimag* and *soum* governments and agencies, EMPAA, and providing means of transport, computer and field equipment to EPA, SSSA, EMPAA, Land Agencies, HMEM, and rangers.

Another important commitment towards local populations living in the PA buffer zones was to develop alternative livelihoods in order to support biodiversity conservation in the eastern region (Objective 2), with a Community Conservation Fund (CCF). The CCF was established and started to fund community proposals in 2002. This component has implemented 76 small projects with a total fund of MNT 412.9 million in 26 *soums* in Eastern Mongolia (over the 34 *soums* involved in the project activities), including 14 *soums* in Dornod *aimag*, 6 *soums* in Sukhbaatar *aimag*, and 6 *soums* in Khentii *aimag*. 1570 individuals of 325 households from *soum* centers have been involved in 32 project activities. In 2004, the monthly income of the 325 households involved in CCF projects had increased on average by MNT 18 000 as compared to 2002 (when the CCF was established and was first used to fund community projects). CCF activities have played an important role in the environmental and biodiversity conservation as they contributed to increase public

awareness and acted as incentives to encourage the participation of local communities in conservation activities in the region.

A revolving fund was set up with a capital of MNT 105 million to create a sustainable financing mechanism contributing to replenish BZ Development Funds, thus helping local governments and BZ councils with the implementation of BZ management plans. This revolving fund provided more than MNT 1.3 million of funding resources to support the five BZ Councils. In addition, 110 individuals have benefited loans of MNT 86.3 million from the revolving fund which had increased by the end of the project to MNT 112 million due to accrued interests.

4.1.4. Replication approach

Knowledge transfer

Lessons learned and knowledge acquired in the course of the project were promoted in documents based on project results (guides, books, popularization documents), during training workshops, and national and regional forums.

Seminars, workshops and conferences. The project has put a great emphasis on sharing the knowledge, know-how and information acquired through research and planning activities (PA and BZ management, *soum* land use) through the organization of national seminars:

- "Eastern Mongolian Ecosystem" in 2000,
- "Legislation and current management statement and future perspectives" in 2002,
- "Research project outputs and biodiversity conservation" in 2002,
- "Incorporation of biodiversity into local land use planning" in 2004,
- "Presentation of Eastern Steppe Biodiversity Project Activities Implemented in Three Eastern *aimags*" in 2005.
- Legal and administrative status of protected areas in Mongolia. 2003
- International conference on conservation of Mongolian gazelle. 1999

The project has organized or contributed to workshops and conferences to discuss research results and specific issues with stakeholders in order to improve the implementation of existing laws or to devise resolutions aiming at protecting the environment and natural resources, more specifically about gazelle and marmot hunting.

Books and published material. A study on biodiversity and ecology of fish, aquatic invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles in the lakes and rivers of Eastern Mongolia, supported by the project, allowed the preparation and publication of two guide books: the first book on fish of Mongolia and the first illustrated book on amphibians and reptiles of Mongolia.

Numerous documents have been published to disseminate the results of the research projects to target populations:

- The project collaborated with WCS, the Sustainable Grassland Management Project and USAID to organize an international workshop on Brandt's Vole management. The workshop permitted to share international and national experiences, including the research conducted by the project, on preventing Brandt's Vole outbreak while maintaining ecological balance, to exchange opinions about practical techniques, and to discuss extensively the consequences of using toxic chemicals to eradicate rodents. The workshop proceedings were published and various handouts were produced to introduce non chemical techniques / ecological approach to local herders.

- The Eastern Steppe Ecosystem Scientific Journal, was published once in 2004 to disseminate the results of the research projects conducted by the project.
- Two documents, “Eastern Mongolian Ecosystem” and “Eastern Mongolian Biodiversity and Rangeland Conditions“, have been published and distributed to the public and target audiences to disseminate the research findings and outputs.
- The ESBP conducted a study to assess the extent and level of illegal and legal hunting of game species, including total number hunted, seasonality of hunting, costs and benefits of hunting activities, local, national, and international demand for eastern steppe wildlife products, social attitude toward regulation, and recommended alternative control measures. Research findings and recommendations were disseminated to MNE, EMPAA, SSA, and local stakeholders.
- Guidelines for integrating biodiversity concerns into *soum* land use plans and a pilot land use plan (Bayandun *soum*) were developed by the project and are now adopted by the Land Agency to implement this approach at the national level. The factor restricting the application of the model to the entire country is the lack of appropriate financial resources. The pilot *soum* land use plan is now used as a model to develop the *aimag* land use plan.

Expansion of demonstration project

The project established standard methods for training local staff in data collection and analysis.

- A methodology to monitor pasture condition was developed by the project and approved by the Institute of Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring in 2001. It is now incorporated into the National Manual for Rangeland Health Monitoring and recognized for use on nationwide scale.
- ESBP funded a 3-year research project on Brandt’s vole population dynamics and its role in the steppe ecosystem. Scientists concluded that Brandt’s voles outbreaks occurred mainly in overgrazed and deteriorated pastures. The condition of the pasture was therefore the best indicator to warn of a high risk for Brandt’s vole outbreak. Also, it became clear that the cheapest, safest to human and other species health, and most effective method to prevent Brandt’s vole infestations was to adopt pasture sustainable management and to restore the ecological balance in the ecosystem by protecting natural predators of the rodent. At the same time, it was shown that not only the use of toxic chemicals had not been effective to control Brandt’s vole outbreak, but it also had negative impacts on predator species, birds, and local community’s health and economy.

  Findings of the research project were widely distributed to local and central government official, and to local people, and various handouts introducing simple mechanical techniques were produced for practitioners. This concept is now well integrated in sustainable grassland management practice and has been replicated in other *aimags* in the country through a small community-based project funded by the GEF SGP and through the UNDP/Netherlands supported Sustainable Grasslands Management Project which is operating in 34 *soums* in 3 *aimags*. Also, as a result of this research project and information dissemination, hunting of fox and corsac fox has been prohibited in areas where the risk of Brandt’s vole outbreak is high, and nesting and perch structures were built for prey birds with the participation of local herders.
- In order to support the *soums*, more particularly those located in PA Buffer Zones, with capacity building and enhancing public awareness on fire prevention, the ESBP developed a model *soum* fire management plan and distributed it to the

three eastern *aimags* and their *soums* Governor's offices and Land Use agencies. The project set up, trained and equipped volunteer fire-fighting brigades with fire blowers and other fire-fighting tools in 3 *soums*. Several meetings, seminars, trainings and public awareness activities were organized to promote this *soum* fire management model, notably through the project NCVs in their respective *soums*. The model was replicated in 3 additional *soums* who learned from the other fire brigades and acquired equipment with their own financial resources.

- The design and methodology to monitor illegal hunting activities, which was developed under the hunting study was used in the western region of Mongolia to study illegal trade of musk deer pod.

Capacity building / development

The project has significantly contributed to develop key capacities of a wide range of actors through developing new tools and conducting trainings and workshops, in order to expand the outcomes to national scale.

GIS capacity The project set up a GIS laboratory, built a comprehensive environmental database, and developed user-friendly interactive software to access, process and update GIS and non-GIS data. The new user-friendly GIS software was designed by the project to be affordable and less technically demanding, and to operate in a Windows environment, in order to make it widely accessible by relevant users without having to appeal systematically to highly trained GIS specialists, which allows eventually expanding its use on nationwide scale.

Databases were updated with research data and results, inventory and monitoring data and on land use in the eastern region. An environmental database on environmental violations in the three eastern *aimags* was established at the regional SSSA.

The project supported the three eastern *aimag* governments, including their EPAs, SSSAs, Land Agencies, and the EMPAA with the establishment of their environmental databases and provided training on the use of the GIS software. This new GIS capacity makes possible the integration of biodiversity concerns in local development plans in the eastern region, enables decision makers and land use planners to make scientifically sound management decisions for environmental planning and the environmental database sets a baseline to monitor further evolution of the eastern ecosystems and resources.

Herder communities Local herder communities have been empowered and their capacities developed to effectively plan and achieve a sustainable management of their pastures and wildlife resources.

EMPAA, Buffer Zone Councils, *aimag* and *soum* Officials Based on the interviews conducted with the relevant stakeholders (EMPAA, Buffer Zone Councils, *aimag* and *soum* Officials, Land Agencies, and Local communities), new capacities have been developed: to use and update GIS based environmental database, integrate biodiversity issues in land use plans and implement land use policy, and develop and implement PA and Buffer Zone management plans using participatory approaches.

The project has organized or contributed to workshops and conferences to discuss research results and specific issues with stakeholders in order to improve the implementation of existing laws or to devise resolutions aiming at protecting the environment and natural resources (gazelle and marmot hunting).

PA staff was trained to improve the implementation of PA management plans. The high rate of turnover in PAA reduced the efficiency of this training as newly appointed personnel had to be trained repeatedly.

Regional and local capacities to prevent fires have been improved through training programs and workshops for fire departments, civil defense departments, and local governments.

Rangers certification course According to one of the recently adopted amendments to the Environmental Protection Law of Mongolia, having "completed a professional training course at an education institution with a special license to conduct environmental training", is now mandatory to be hired as ranger. In anticipation of this requirement, the project supported professional certificate training for all rangers and inspectors of PAs and BZs.

Biology teachers Through the capacity development (didactic material, posters) provided to biology teachers in the eastern *aimags* in collaboration with EMPAA, the project contributed to the emergence of a new advocacy group for the defense of environment. As a group they sent an official letter to the Dornod Governor, copy to EMPAA/MNE, to express their concern about the construction of a bridge in the Numrug SPA.

4.1.5. Cost effectiveness

Compliance with the incremental cost criteria

At the time the project was designed, the rationale for GEF financial support rested on the exceptional biodiversity of global importance in Mongolia and the fact that, on its own, the Government of Mongolia was unlikely to achieve global environmental benefits as it did not have the economic strength to concentrate on biodiversity and other environmental issues, and still lacked the necessary technical skills to address the threats to this biodiversity. As the regular budget for the PAA and local government administration was insufficient, there was no development or implementation of BZ management plans, or of models for the sustainable use of grassland ecosystems. The level of species protection was insufficient and further land degradation and loss of biodiversity was to be expected. The implementation of the Law on Hunting adopted in 1995 was limited by inappropriate number of rangers, border guards and environment inspectors, inadequate means of patrolling their areas and insufficient training in ecosystem, wildlife and protected area management.

The incremental cost criteria imply that GEF funds should cover only the agreed incremental costs of measures to achieve global environmental benefits in the focal area, i.e. biodiversity of global importance. The incremental cost of the project allowed addressing the **primary threats to biodiversity** in the eastern region:

- **land degradation due to inappropriate land-use practices and concentration around *soum* centers** → through developing sustainable pasture management practices and training herder communities to implement them,
- **increased frequency of wildfire** → through increasing the regional and local capacities to prevent human-induced fires through training programs for fire departments, civil defense departments, and local governments to enable them to apply a model fire management to all *soums* in the eastern *aimags*, providing fire-fighting equipment and setting up voluntary fire-fighting brigades;
- **illegal hunting** → through developing and implementing a tagging system to improve the enforcement of the Law on Hunting, training rangers and enabling them to achieve a certification training, and establishing voluntary patrols;
- **over-exploitation of vegetation for medicinal and fuelwood needs** →through developing tree nurseries, conducting experimental projects with *soum* residents to grow rare medicinal plants and generate benefits to them, and planting fruit trees and shrubs;

- and **indiscriminate pesticide spraying** → through developing an ecological approach to control Brandt's voles populations and developing the capacities of local herder communities to implement it.

The alternative implemented by the project with GEF support contributed to improve the protection of globally significant biological diversity in the PAs and BZs. The project did not attempt to replace local capabilities, institutions, nor production systems, but focused on strategic aspects such as PA and BZ management plans, PAA, BZ council, and ranger capacities, local government capacities, and targeted research.

The project contributed to expand protected areas but mostly endeavoured to strengthen the existing protected area system by drafting protected area management plans integrating results of scientific studies, strengthening EMPAA and PAs staff capacities, and providing equipment and a GIS to improve management effectiveness of PAs.

Practices of sustainable use of biodiversity resources have been improved through raising the awareness of local herder communities on the importance of protecting biodiversity and of improving their pasture management practices. Herders capacities have been developed to monitor pasture condition, plan and implement sustainable pasture management by introducing rotational pasture use, use ecological approaches to control Brandt's voles, monitor and protect marmot resource in and around their pastures, and conduct environmental restoration and protection activities (mostly spring protection).

Global benefits captured through enhanced PA and BZ management have been consolidated through measures to raise awareness on biodiversity conservation issues and develop the capacities of *aimag* and *soum* authorities and agencies, notably the land-use planning agency, to effectively incorporating biodiversity conservation components into the formulation of *aimag* and *soum* development policies and plans.

As root causes of the threats to biodiversity are embedded in socio-economic and political developments in Mongolia, the project also aimed at improving livelihoods of people living in the BZ.

The project also served as a frame to generate seed money for the METF set up under the pilot phase project, to create a sustainable financing mechanism to support biodiversity conservation initiatives.

Analysis of attainment of global environmental objectives

The global environmental objective of this project, as stated in the project document, was to conserve the unique Eastern Mongolian grassland ecosystem and to protect endemic and threatened species through the strengthening of the protected areas and their buffer zones and incorporating biodiversity conservation measures into development policies and plans.

The project has contributed significantly to reach this global objective as it set up the necessary conditions that will eventually ensure the conservation of the Eastern Mongolian grassland ecosystem. These conditions include

- increased awareness for all actors about the importance of conserving biodiversity,
- sense of ownership of endemic and threatened species amongst local communities,
- capacities (human and technical, tools, knowledge and know-how) to monitor biological resources and activities affecting these resources, to plan sustainable

land use and management of resources integrating concerns for biodiversity conservation,

- sustainable financial resources to support biodiversity conservation initiatives in the PA buffer zones,
- improved legal framework to empower local populations to contribute to environmental protection and biodiversity conservation and benefit from the use of natural resources,
- improved implementation of existing laws (specially the laws on Hunting, EIA, PA, BZ, and Reinvestment of Natural Resource Use Fees for Conservation and Restoration of Natural Resource).

Despite these significant achievements, the management plans drafted by the project for 8 PAs have not been accepted by the MNE, thus not adopted nor implemented. Only the Numrug SPA management plan was adopted and implemented with the project's support. In any case, this objective would not have been reached within this project as the budgetary requirements to implement all management plans had been underestimated. However, guidelines for elaborating PA management plans have been drafted and a stakeholder workshop held in December 2005 recommended their adoption by the Ministerial Council. Also, although the other PA management plans could not be implemented, the EMPAA has been trained and equipped, and will be able to take over the implementation of the PA management plans as they will be adopted and appropriate resources will be available.

4.1.6. UNDP comparative advantage

UNDP consists of a global network covering almost all countries and whose support is everywhere guided by the same principles of sustainable human development. The numerous knowledge and experience acquired from all the various actions of this network make up an institutional memory or "database" of lessons learned and best/worst practices that can benefit operations conducted within each country. In addition, working with UNDP gives access to an international network of specialists whose expertise can help on specific questions or for a more sustained advisory role. One of UNDP's major assets is related to the neutrality of its support, that is that UNDP's support is not conditioned by the adoption of policies by the country, which allows it to hold an independent and credible role with the Government and with the population.

UNDP, as the organisation in charge of coordinating the system of the United Nations, holds a unique position to concert the initiatives of the different United Nations agencies and ensure their complementarities in accordance with their specific capacities and niches. UNDP has supported the major environment-related international conventions for many years in Mongolia, which enables it to follow-up on their implementation, in support to the Government environmental programme.

UNDP's long collaboration with Mongolia's Governments strengthens its advocacy role, which was critical for the pursuit of this project despite the various misunderstandings it has been subjected to. The transparency of UNDP's operations also contributes to this aspect, as any report produced by UNDP is available for everyone use.

UNDP was the first international organization to support environmental conservation and protection in Mongolia through the Mongolian Biodiversity Project (1992–1998) which permitted the development of the National Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan and of a corpus of environmental laws, most of them being adopted by the Government in 1994 and 1995. This framework has permitted the consecutive implementation of a series of community-based natural resource management projects based on lessons learned from the GTZ project which introduced

community-based conservation in northern Khentii (mountainous ecosystems) and in the Gobi (desert ecosystem) to improve PAs and BZs management. UNDP also supported Mongolia to develop its environmental policy in the “Mongolian Action Programme for the 21st Century” and meet its commitment to Agenda 21 sustainable development principles.

4.1.7. Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

GTZ implemented a 2-year project “Conservation and Management of protected areas in Eastern Mongolia” which started in 1996. The GTZ project has provided assistance to the EMPAA (US$ 250,000) in terms of equipment and training of PAA professional staff for the development of PA management plans. They conducted research projects and a vegetation study in Numrug SPA and prepared a 1:100,000 vegetation maps. This project went on until the start of the ESBP which then aimed at filling the gap in equipment and training needs.

Other GTZ projects in northern Khentii *aimag* and in the South Gobi, Bayankhongor and Uvur Khangai *aimags* provided an important model for ESBP to strengthen the management of PAs and their BZ. Main outcomes of the sustained GTZ effort include building local institutions capacities and a framework for stakeholder cooperation, improved NRM and biodiversity conservation and environmental governance. A study tour was organized in 2003 to share GTZ’s experience on BZ development and collaborative management, BZ fund management, community participation in PA management and in BZ councils, and community organisation.

GTZ implemented a project to aid fire victims in the Numrug SPA BZ in 1996, within the framework of their project on “Protected Areas and Buffer Zone Development”. Through EMPAA, they provided about MNT 16 million to provide a mini-van for the hospital and the cost for livestock fencing for 12 households. People were grateful of the help given and, consequently, this changed considerably Dornod *aimag* administration and local people attitudes towards protected areas and EMPAA.

The design for the fire management plan was adopted from a previous GTZ project.

EMPAA specialists and ranger visited GTZ projects in 2000 to share experiences with Govi Gurvan Saikhan NCP Administration and Khan Khentii SPA Administration.

WB Fuel-efficient stoves have been developed in a WB project. 6 fuel-efficient stoves were tested in Sukhbaatar *aimag* and more were provided to border guards.

UNDP/GEF Mongolia Biodiversity Project In 1995-1996 the UNDP/GEF Mongolia Biodiversity Project carried out surveys in the SPA, organized training for all Dornod rangers in Numrug SPA, and assisted the army unit at Numrug post with a small community support project

UNDP - MAP-21 The project assisted in developing the biodiversity aspects of the Sustainable Development Programme for the eastern three *aimags* which production was coordinated by the UNDP-funded project "MAP-21".

UNDP - Great Gobi A project Specialists of the EMPAA visited the Gobi SPA Administration in 2004 to share experiences.

Other Mongolian PAs EMPAA specialists have visited the Khustai Nuruu NCP Administration in 2002.

China In 2002, EMPAA specialists visited the Dalai Nuur SPA Administration, in China to share experiences.

4.2. Implementation

4.2.1. Project Financing

Planned and actual contributions to project cost

A total of US$ 432,612 was provided by UNDP in January 1998 from TRAC funds for the preparation of the project MON/98/301 “Mongolian Environmental Trust Fund”. At the signature of the full project document in June 1998, MON/98/301 was continued as an integral part of the full project, with a revised budget of US$ 1,000,000 from TRAC funds. The GEF contribution pledged to the project, and designated as MON/97/G32, amounted to US$ 5,046,032. The contribution pledged by the Government of Mongolia was US$ 700,000 in cash and US$ 1,354,920 in kind. The potential contribution from other donors added up to 3,767,000 US$. Total project financing amounted to US$ 11,986,180.

Overall cost for implementing project activities (i.e. excluding contributions to the METF) is almost equal to the amount in the budget, the ratio being 101.54%. Total excluding contributions to the METF) is US$ 3,673,206.85 (as of December 2005) and distributed as follows: GEF: US$ 3,105,558.00, and TRAC: US$ 511,800.00 amounting respectively to 100% and 111% of the budgeted costs.

GEF actual contributions to METF are much lower than the pledged amount. According to the GEF/Trust Fund Grant Agreement, the GEF had committed funding as a one-to-one matching fund provided specific conditions related to the operation of the fund were met. As these conditions were not met, the contributions were delayed and the agreement expired in June 2005. Details on the chronology of events or activities related to the METF, including the donors instalments are given in Annex 7.

Planned and actual project cost

Actual cost by activity (in US$) is known only for the years 2004 and 2005 as reporting format and categories were changed with the introduction of a new financial system in 2004. Therefore the total cost by activity is not known, and planned and actual costs for the whole project could not be compared.

However, figures for expenditure categories were available and planned and actual costs per expenditure category could be compared, as well as GEF and UNDP planned and actual total contributions.

Table 1. GEF and TRAC funds by expenditure category for the period June 1998 – December 2005

Expenditure categories	GEF		TRAC		Total		%
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
International experts	778 514.00	696 693.37	65 000.00	69 760.58	843 514.00	766 453.95	90.86
Administrative support	371 290.00	197 358.26	1 500.00	1 496.00	372 790.00	198 854.26	53.34
UN Volunteers	7 200.00	23 175.89	32 000.00	21 075.00	39 200.00	44 250.89	112.88
Travel/Monitoring trips	69 800.00	253 901.56	250.00	39 492.90	70 050.00	293 394.46	418.84
Mission/Eval. Costs	60 000.00	42 966.12	-	4 668.41	60 000.00	47 634.53	79.39
National professionals	467 100.00	331 785.42	6 680.00	7 314.05	473 780.00	339 099.47	71.57
Subtotal – Staff	**1 753 904.00**	**1 545 880.62**	**105 430.00**	**143 806.94**	**1 859 334.00**	**1 689 687.56**	**90.88**
Sub-Contracts	370 647.00	385 169.16	75 770.00	56 025.05	446 417.00	441 194.21	98.83
CCF	12 000.00	294 105.01	190 000.00	148 159.80	202 000.00	442 264.81	218.94
Training/Fellowships	564 016.00	292 704.49	7 450.00	13 583.06	571 466.00	306 287.55	53.60

Equipment/Material	167 562.00	242 300.80	86 760.00	125 347.31	254 322.00	367 648.11	144.56
Misc/Reporting Printing	237 429.00	345 397.92	46 390.00	80 726.69	283 819.00	426 124.61	150.14
Subtotal – Other	**1 351 654.00**	**1 559 677.38**	**406 370.00**	**423 841.91**	**1 758 024.00**	**1 983 519.29**	**112.83**
Total excluding METF	**3 105 558.00**	**3 105 558.00**	**511 800.00**	**567 648.85**	**3 617 358.00**	**3 673 206.85**	**101.54**
METF	2 000 000.00	400 000.00	500 000.00	385 778.00	2 500 000.00	785 778.00	31.43
GRAND TOTAL	**5 105 558.00**	**3 505 558.00**	**1 011 800.00**	**953 426.85**	**6 117 358.00**	**4 458 984.85**	**72.89**

Financing is reported for each expenditure category in Table 1. This table shows that the expenditures for international staff (2 international experts) represent 21% of the total cost, while other categories of expenses represent 12 to 1 % of the total project cost excluding METF.

The planned amounts in this table represent figures from the original project document. During the 7 years of implementation, budget revisions were made to adjust the project budget to the approved workplans. With the introduction of a new financial system as of 2004, the reporting format and categories have changed. For example all the project staff salaries for 2004 and 2005 (professional and administrative) which were previously included in the line “Administrative support” are now charged to one expenditure account titled as “National Professionals Category”. This explains the low ratio (53.34%) observed for the administrative support.

Training costs were split into specific types of expenses such as Travel/Monitoring trips category; renting of hall and other workshops/meeting related costs were reported under Misc./Reporting & Printing category. This explains the low ratio (53%) of actual vs. planned Training cost. Lots of various expenses were reported under Misc., such as reporting costs, rents, advocacy, printing and publications, stationary and any expense that could not be reported under the other categories.

The comparison of planned vs. actual cost for the “Travel/Monitoring trips” category shows that the amount spent was 4 times higher than what had been budgeted. The very high travel costs are related to the fact that the project was implemented from 2 distant offices, and the participatory planning and evaluation exercises involved a lot of travel. Also, “CCF” is another expenditure showing a large discrepancy between planned and actual costs, as funds spent were twice as high as the amount budgeted.

Leveraged funds

WCS co-funded the research project “Distribution and Movement of Migratory Mongolian Gazelles with US$ 200,000.

WWF contributed to the national forum on “Legal and Administrative Status of Protected Areas in Mongolia” with 779,356 MNT (corresponding roughly to US$ 770). WWF also contributed MNT 1 million to the third workshop which was organized jointly with the Standing Committee of the Parliament on Environment and Rural Development, to amend environmental laws.

The project signed a Memorandum of Understanding with WWF-Mongolia and UMENGO to coordinate efforts to strengthen the implementation of Mongolian Law on Protected Areas and Mongolian Law on EIA. WWF-Mongolia contributed MNT 3.5 million (corresponding roughly to US$ 3,000). The Asia Foundation contributed MNT 3.1 million (corresponding roughly to US$ 2,700) through UMENGO to carry out a survey on the local residents’ opinion regarding the Numrug bridge.

The project set up, trained and equipped fire fighting brigades in 3 *soums*. This was replicated in 3 additional *soums* with their own financial resources, but the total investment related to these replications is not known.

Each buffer zone *soum* contributed 300,000 MNT to its buffer zone fund, as a matching contribution to the investment of 1,000,000 MNT from the project. Since 5 *soums* were involved, the total contribution from the *soums* is 1,500,000 MNT.

4.2.2. Monitoring and evaluation (rating: MS)

Initial M&E plan

The initial monitoring and evaluation plan included a schedule for yearly tripartite meetings to review project objectives in line with experience learned, biannual participatory evaluations, a mid-term review, and a final evaluation.

The Government was to provide UNDP with certified periodic financial statements, and with an annual audit of the financial statements relating to the status of UNDP (including GEF) funds according to the UNDP Policies and Procedures. The audits had to be conducted by the legally recognized auditor of the Government, or by a commercial auditor engaged by the Government.

15 ecological and socio-economic indicators had been suggested in the project document to measure the impact of the project. The 1999 TPR developed and adopted a different set of 14 indicators to measure project's progress.

Effectiveness of implementation

Project Implementation Reports and Annual Project Reports. Project Implementation Reports (PIR) and Annual Project Reports (APR) have been submitted to UNDP and GEF in 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005. These reports prepared according to established UNDP/GEF standards, mainly gave an account of progress made towards achievement of the project's objectives through measurement of the impact indicators, and were quite informative mostly on implementation issues.

Tripartite Project Reviews. Five TPR (1999, 2000, 2001, 2003 and 2004) meetings and one Internal Review (2000) meeting were held in Choibalsan and in Ulaanbaatar. No TPR was held in 2002 due to the disagreements on the project's actual achievements and execution arrangements between UNDP and MNE. Overall, TPR recommendations were implemented by the project.

The first TPR identified indicators to measure project progress. Until the mid-term evaluation in 2001, the yearly TPR have been effective as a means of annual review and to propose minor adjustments.

The 2003 TPR made a recommendation to UNDP and MNE urging them to agree on execution arrangements as the project had been operating under suspended national execution since 2001. This TPR agreed that only the Numrug SPA management plan would be implemented as a model, thereby modifying the expected results regarding the implementation of all PA management plans. The objective was deemed unrealistic as baseline data had to be collected for 2 additional PAs and budgetary requirements to implement management plans had been underestimated. Amongst other recommendations, the TPR encouraged communities outside BZ to apply for funding for community conservation initiatives to GEF SGP as the CCF applies only to communities located within the BZ of PAs.

A mini TPR was held in 2004 to discuss the implications of the executing the project under UNOPS. It was recommended to establish a Steering Committee and to initiate the project's independent terminal evaluation.

Mid-term Evaluation. The project implementation was evaluated by an Independent Mid-term Evaluation conducted in July 2002 and a Project Implementation Evaluation commissioned by the MNE in July 2003. Some of the most significant recommendations of the mid-term evaluation were to shift the focus of the project's

efforts from objective 1 to objectives 2 and 3, and to extend the NUNVs employment for the whole duration of the project. These recommendations were followed.

Audit reports. National audits have been conducted on a yearly basis for the years 1998 to 2001, and 2003 to 2004. Audits were covering both MON/97/G32 and MON/98/301. According to the terms of reference, audits had to verify the financial and administrative management, technical realizations, and program management. The rate of technical and financial realization was only qualitatively evaluated. Overall, besides noting that PA management plans were not adopted nor implemented and that the activities related to the METF were not conducted as planned, the audit reports positively concluded that:

- Project activities were implemented in accordance with approved work plans
- Disbursements were made in accordance with the project document and UNDP rules and procedures specified in UNDP NEX manual.
- The project disbursements are valid and supported by adequate documentation
- The project financial statements were in conformity with UNDP financial rules and procedures
- Non-expandable equipment is accurately recorded and properly managed
- Project management maintained adequate management structure, financial and internal control systems

Quality and use of relevant impact indicators

14 ecological and socio-economic indicators have been identified during the 1999 TPR to measure the impact of the project. The measurement of the indicators relied on independent sources of information, such as the Regional and Local Fire and Civil Defense Department and local governments (for fire occurrences), Information and Computer Center of MNE (for vegetation cover), EMPAA and EPA (for illegal hunting), Oil and Mining Authority (for mining activities), surveys and studies, Buffer Zone Management Committee reports, long-term monitoring and inventory data, *aimag* and *soum* reports, as well as police records (for illegal hunting records). The following eleven indicators were used to report project outcomes on a yearly basis:

- Changes to natural vegetation cover: Vegetation cover surface (in hectares) *i*) in the SPAs, or *ii*) around BZs and around *soums* near PAs, differentiating green cover, lichen, and empty grounds in 2005 as compared to the average of 1995-1998.
- Fire: Number and extent (ha) of human-caused fires in 2005 as compared to 1995-1999 average.

  Data are based on satellite images collected on a daily basis and comparisons were made between years, separately for spring and fall seasons, as spring and autumn fires have a quite different impact on ecosystems. Spring fires are spread quickly by the wind and do not burn the soil significantly, while autumn fires burn more slowly, affecting soil quality and burning plant seeds and roots. The latter has a more severe impact on pasture winter reserves for livestock.
- Illegal activities in Protected Areas (hunting, mining, plant collection) decreased by 50 % at the end of the project 2005 as compared to the average of 1996-1998.

  An increased number of arrests for illegal hunting or harvesting may be misleading and must be interpreted with caution as improved patrolling may result in an increase of the rate of violations reports, which should not be interpreted necessarily as an effective increase of illegal activities.
- Improvement of livelihoods of beneficiaries of project's CCF small grants in PA Buffer Zones in comparison to 1999 baseline, expressed as the average monthly income of households involved in project activities.

This indicator does not allow to discriminate a sustainable livelihood improvement from a short-term gain due to the CCF grants.

- Three proposed PAs and three proposed extensions to existing PAs remain free from mining and other activities inconsistent with EIAs.
- Number of annual land-use requests insconsistent with the project's biodiversity conservation criteria will decrease to zero in 2005.
- Revisions of PA management plans and annual plans for the PAs continue to be prepared.

  This indicator was not relevant as draft management plans were never accepted by the MNE, even after integrating comments and extensive revisions.
- Biodiversity conservation measures developed by the project are included in the 2004-2008 central and local governments 4-year plans.
- METF is fully capitalized and is providing funds for biodiversity.
- PA and BZ principles are applied to other PAs and BZ in Mongolia, as indicated by reference to this project.
- Relevant lessons learned from the project's biodiversity overlays are being applied to development plans in other areas in Mongolia.

Lessons learned for the design and implementation of other similar M&E systems

The participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation involving all relevant project stakeholders, including the 2 project offices, NCVs, staff from EMPAA, EPA, SSSA, , Land Authority, environmental offices in the 3 *aimags*, and implemented in 2002 resulted in a significant improvement of the planning and implementation of activities. Joint evaluation and reporting on work performance and joint planning of activities, allowed building common understanding and consensus amongst project staff and stakeholders which contributed greatly to improve motivation to implement planned activities and team building.

4.2.3. Execution and implementation modalities

As all UNDP projects in Mongolia, this project was implemented under National Execution (NEX) modality. According to the initial implementation arrangement, the national executing agency was the MNE and its agencies, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Hydrometeorology and Environment Monitoring (HMEM). At the local level, the project has worked at several institutional levels, working directly with the Eastern Steppe Protected Area Administration, the EPA and HMEM centers of each province, all three *aimag* governments, and *soum* and *bag* governors. The project also worked with local people and NGOs. UNDP was to perform its standard functions as set out in the UNDP Procedures for National Execution and UNOPS was responsible for international procurement (international staff contracts and equipment).

The new government, elected in 2000, did not agree with the project approach, mainly with the capacity-building and research components, fearing that it would not lead to "tangible" results. The contract of the National Project Coordinator was not renewed, and lack of agreement on his replacement left the project without management and coordination at the national level from July 2001 to March 2002. The national execution by the Ministry of Nature and Environment (MNE) was suspended in 2001 because of lack of common understanding of project's objectives between executing, implementing and funding agencies. Although UNDP and the project team maintained a stable commitment to the project's objectives and kept

implementing project activities, these problems had an impact on the rate of implementation, slowing down or postponing some of the project's activities in 2001–2002, until the recruitment of new National Project Coordinator in 2002. This impact includes the delayed recruitment of a technical advisor for the CCF component of the project, which consequently delayed the implementation of this key component, which in turn could jeopardize the sustainability of this component's outcomes.

The 2000 elections brought about a turnover of national, *aimag* and *soum* government officials – of which many had been trained by the project. The project had to plan additional trainings for *aimag* and *soum* government staff, and for local environment inspectors.

Under the initial institutional setup, the EPA, the Land Management Agency and the HMEM Agency were all three within the MNE. The 2000 elections entailed also a reorganization of these agencies. The State Specialized Supervision "Inspectorate" Agency was created under the direct authority of the Prime Minister. The Land Agency now comes under the authority of the Mongolian Governmental Regulatory Agency – Administration of Land Affairs, Geodesy and Cartography.

In July 2003, the UNDP CO received headquarters' clearance for UNDP direct execution, which was not directly applied on the reasons of best interest of the project and UNDP-government partnership. Although MNE national execution was suspended, by 2004 the ministry was again involved in the planning process (annual and quarterly work plans). MNE, UNDP and GEF, through the mediation of the UNDP, negotiated with UNOPS until March 2004 when at a TPR meeting in Ulaanbaatar, the parties agreed on the terms of UNOPS execution. This arrangement was never actually operational due to UNOPS high service fees and their inflexibility to execute the project other than from New York. Previous discussions with WCS as an executing agency had also failed as MNE had raised objections.

The negative impact related to these implementation problems might have been mitigated if a steering committee had been set up for the project. The primary role of a steering committee is to provide policy and overall broad guidance for the project, which would have supported the search for appropriate solutions. Also, as the project design had not envisioned the lack of sustained commitment on the part of the Government as a potential risk, no mitigation or optional measure was identified to deal with the issue.

Throughout this period, the project team maintained its commitment to carry out the activities as planned, in collaboration with international, national and local partners to achieve their work plan targets in protected area and buffer zone management, law and policy lobbying and community livelihood improvement.

4.2.4. Management by the UNDP country office

UNDP has taken the appropriate measures to monitor and support the project implementation. According to the NEX procedures, quarterly work plans and budgets had to be prepared in advance and submitted to the National Project Director (NPD) and then to UNDP for approval. Once approved by the NPD and UNDP, advance payments corresponding to the approved budget were paid by UNDP and deposited in the project's bank account in Ulaanbaatar. The funds were then transferred in the project's account in Choibalsan where the Project Manager had delegated authority to incur expenditure in accordance with the approved budget. In Ulaanbaatar, the NPD and National Project Coordinator (NPC) were the designated signatories for the project's bank account, thus requiring the involvement and approval of the NPD for every transaction.

Under the direct execution modalities, while national execution by the MNE was suspended (from 2001), work plans were submitted directly to UNDP. During this period, the signatories for the expenses of the project headquarters in Ulaanbaatar were the NPC and the UNDP DRR who had to approve work plans, budgets and expenses. UNDP provided quarterly advances on the basis of the approved work plan and budget. In 2004, the NPD was reinstated and the work plans had to be reviewed and get the approval of the NPD at MNE. UNDP CO retained the financial approval of expenses and monitoring of the project management.

Although UNDP and the project team maintained a stable commitment to the project's objectives and development goal, and kept implementing project activities, these problems slowed down the rate of implementation of the project in 2001–2002. Nevertheless, UNDP's sustained support was crucial in allowing the project to carry the operations that were under its control to a successful conclusion, thereby fulfilling its commitment towards local communities and all stakeholders who had actively been involved in the planning and implementation of the project activities.

UNDP also showed its commitment towards a particular aspect of this project, which was related to the capitalization of the METF. Repeated efforts to revitalize the operation of the METF management board remained ineffective, owing to the lack of availability or commitment from its members.

4.3. Results

4.3.1. Project's main outputs

The project has dealt with the following aspects during its implementation:

- Research and monitoring
- Training
- Planning and management
- Public awareness
- Community Conservation Fund
- Geographical Information System and Environmental Database
- Law and Policy
- Land use and soil protection
- Fire management
- METF

Research and monitoring

A total of 17 research projects were subcontracted to national and international institutions. The list in presented in the annex 6.

The results and outputs of the research projects have been compiled, published ("Eastern Mongolian Ecosystem" and Eastern Mongolian Biodiversity and Rangeland Conditions) and distributed to target groups.

Some research project findings and outputs have provided relevant information to improve environmental management in Protected Areas and their Buffer Zones as well as grassland ecosystems outside protected areas with sound scientific bases.

A five year inventory and monitoring plan for the Protected Areas in Eastern Mongolia was developed and implemented and specialists and rangers of Eastern Mongolian Protected Area Administration (EMPAA) have been trained in inventory and monitoring methods.

Eight plots have been selected and delimited and are used by hydro-meteorological stations specialists in the region to monitor vegetation cover changes.

Training

Various training activities were held for beneficiaries at national and local levels:

- Short-term overseas training for 2 PA staff
- Tuition fees for a master degree studies granted to the EMPAA GIS specialist
- 4 grants for 1-year tuition fees awarded to biology university students from the eastern *aimags*
- Professional certification training for rangers
- National seminars and training workshops organized by project specialists
- Training of NCVs (previously as NUNVs)
- Trainings organized by the Community Conservation Fund component

Planning and management

Assistance to the EMPAA in developing and implementing management plans for the Eastern Mongolian Protected Areas:

- Management plans for 9 protected areas (3 Strictly Protected Areas, 1 National Conservation Park, 5 Natural Reserves) were developed on the basis of guidelines developed by an international expert. They were submitted to the MNE for review and approval. Of the 9 draft management plans submitted for approval, only the management plan for Numrug SPA was approved by the MNE. The project assisted the EMPAA with MNT 26 million for the implementation of the Numrug SPA management plan. The other management plans have been reviewed by relevant stakeholders and submitted again to MNE.
- 5 BZ councils were set up and have been assisted to develop and implement management plans for Protected Area Buffer Zones in the region. The BZ councils are operational and meet on a quarterly basis. 25 BZ council members were trained in participatory natural resource management and PRA techniques.
- Five Protected Area Buffer Zone (SPA BZ) management plans were developed and approved by their respective *soum* Citizen's Representative Khurals.
- 5 BZ development funds were established to deliver microcredits to the residents of the BZs.
- 9 NUNVs were recruited and trained, later hired as NCVs.

EMPAA capacity building

- Training: The EMPAA staff and rangers were involved in 57 various trainings on professional inspection, PA management, research monitoring, ecotourism and law enforcement, and a specialist could do a master degree.
- Equipment: Equipment, means of transport and a well equipped Information Center were supplied to the EMPAA. The equipment necessary for Numrug SPA management plan implementation has been provided, including computer and audiovisual equipment, two vehicles, horses and riding equipment, generator, small field material, 2 gers and fuel efficient stoves, furniture for the Numrug and Mongol Daguur SPAs information centers, and fire protection material. Equipment worth US$ 48 099 was handed over to EMPAA.

Public awareness

- Project specialists and officers have produced the following information and awareness materials:
  - Published materials, books, field guides, teaching handbook, scientific reports
  - Posters
  - Video films/documentaries
  - Newspaper articles
  - TV and radio programs
- Activities carried out by the project NCVs:
  - Meetings and awareness activities

- Public awareness activities
- Hand out materials on various issues including fire management

▪ Mobile public awareness activities Using the “Gazelle Car”, NCVs, in cooperation with specialists from EMPAA, *aimag* EPAs, Land Use Agencies and SSSA, have provided information and carried out public awareness activities for local residents in remote areas since 2001. The information provided included project activities, conservation initiatives, ecological education, videos and documentaries on environmental and biodiversity conservation.

Community Conservation Funds

In order to support biodiversity conservation and alternative livelihoods in the buffer zones of the protected areas in the eastern region (Objective 2), the project has established a Community Conservation Fund. This fund aims at increasing community participation in conservation activities and assisting in the improvement of livelihoods of local communities in Protected Area Buffer Zones in the region through the development of innovative alternative livelihood projects. CCF activities play an important role in the environmental and biodiversity conservation as they contribute to increase public awareness and act as incentives to encourage the participation of local communities in conservation activities in the region.

Established in 2002, the CCF has allowed the implementation of 76 small projects with a total fund of MNT 412.9 million in 26 *soums* of Eastern Mongolia, including 14 *soums* of Dornod *aimag*, 6 *soums* of Sukhnaatar *aimag*, and 6 *soums* of Khentii *aimag*. The CCF projects were related to protection of rare and endangered species or of their habitat, sustainable use of natural resources, development of ecotourism, reduction of illegal hunting, establishment of environmental information centers, ecological education, forestation and tree nurseries, and establishment of a monitoring center for air pollution. One grant was allocated to protect a historical site.

The results of the CCF component include the followings:

- A total of 26 herder communities have been established and are operational, and about 2,000,000 ha of pastureland is used on a rotational basis. Over 1300 individuals from 270 herder families have joined herder communities and are cooperating to implement rotational use of pastures.
- 1570 individuals of 325 households from *soum* centers have been involved in 32 income generating or alternative livelihood activities. On average, CCF beneficiaries represent 7.5% of *soum* population. The monthly income of households involved in project activities increased on average from MNT 38 800 in 2002 to MNT 50 000 in 2004.
- Environmental Information Centers have been established in 17 *soums*, 22 gers were set up as “solidarity palace” in the countryside.
- Herders are involved in the protection of marmots through individual contracts. More than 100 families in 4 *soums* have established agreements with local governments to manage marmot population in and around their pastures.
- 16 volunteer community patrolling teams were established and have some funds for their operations. These teams have been conducting regular patrolling in the BZ of the SPAs. Also, a network of 153 local informants is active in 14 *soums*.
- 48 springs are protected with livestock closures and shrubs and bushes have been planted over 4.5 ha for the natural protection of springs.

Five *soum* governments have contributed each MNT 300 000 to the BZ funds. Each of the BZ Councils has a revolving fund of MNT 20 million. By the end of 2004, the funds had provided 65 loans amounting to MNT 54.2 million and 14 grants totaling

MNT 60 million to residents of the BZ. Interests gained from loans added up to MNT 2 million. By the end of 2005, 110 individuals had benefited loans of MNT 86.3 million from the BZ Support revolving fund and Buffer Zone Support Revolving Fund has increased from MNT 105 million to MNT 112 million.

Geographical Information System and Environmental Database

The project has established a GIS laboratory and developed interactive software operating in a Windows environment to access databases, process GIS data, and update databases with research data and results, as well as data on land use in the eastern region. The project supported the three eastern *aimag* EPAs, SSSAs, Land Agencies, and the EMPAA with the establishment of their environmental database and provided training on the use of the GIS software.

Law and Policy

- A hunting study research project was implemented and amendments to the Law on Hunting were drafted by the project and the use of tags to wildlife products was first initiated and first piloted during the marmot hunting season in 2003.
- A research on impacts of Brandt's vole on pastureland was conducted and recommendations on the use of biological methods and pastureland management approaches i.e. pilot projects on construction of stone perches for raptors and rotational use of pastureland have been developed and implemented in the region. A recommendation to phase out the use of Bromadiolone was made and delivered to decision makers and other stakeholders.
- A chapter on Biodiversity Conservation was included in the Sustainable Development Program of the Eastern Region at the project initiative.
- A public hearing on the findings of the detailed EIA for the proposed Numrug River Bridge was organized with the project support, as a first-ever exercise for public involvement in decision-making in the country. With the project's direct input, an amendment to the Law on EIA to improve the impact of the public hearings was proposed for the Parliament adoption through the Parliament Standing Committee on Environment and Rural Development.
- A financial support was delivered for the establishment anti-poaching Unit "IRVES-3" in the eastern region.
- Initiated the inclusion of a chapter on biodiversity conservation in the annual *soum* land use plan development regulation.
- A seminar on generation of financial sources required for environmental conservation and restoration was organized in order to set up implementation mechanisms for the Law on Portions Allocated from the Natural Resource Use Payment Income to Environmental Conservation and Restoration.

Land use and soil protection

The third main objective of the project is to incorporate the biodiversity conservation in to the regional and local land use planning.

- A model land use plan was developed based on Bayandun *soum* land use plan and adopted by the Central Agency for Land Use. *Soum* governors and *soum* land use officers in the three eastern *aimags* were trained on using the model land use plan.
- Training on EIA provided to local governments officials and mining companies to improve implementation of environmental restoration plans included in the EIA reports.

- Cooperation agreement with the Government Regulatory Agency on Administration of Land Affairs, Geodesy and Cartography regarding the incorporation of biodiversity conservation into land use planning
- National seminar on Land use
- Tree nurseries were set up and 14 forestation projects for soil protection were implemented in areas vulnerable to soil erosion in the eastern region. By the end of 2004, fruit trees and shrubs had been planted over 6 ha for soil conservation in the 3 *aimags*.

Fire management

- Regional and local capacities to prevent fires have been improved through training programs and workshops for fire departments, civil defense departments, and local governments.
- In order to support the *soums*, more particularly those located in PA Buffer Zones, with capacity building and enhancing public awareness on fire prevention, the ESBP developed a model *soum* fire management plan and distributed it to the three eastern *aimags* and their *soums* Governor's offices and Land Use agencies to apply to all *soums*. The project set up, trained and equipped volunteer fire-fighting brigades with fire blowers and other fire-fighting tools in 3 *soums*. Several meetings, seminars, trainings and public awareness activities were organized to promote this *soum* fire management model, notably through the project NCVs in their respective *soums*. The model was replicated in 3 additional *soums* who learned from the other fire brigades and acquired equipment with their own financial resources.

METF

The project served as a frame to generate seed money for the METF set up under the pilot phase project. All activities related to the establishment of the METF and associated governance bodies were under the direct responsibility of the MNE and UNDP CO. The key step or events related to this activity are presented in Annex 7.

4.3.2. Attainment of objectives

Development objective

> *Promote and ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the protected areas and buffer zones of the Eastern Mongolian grassland ecosystem, and incorporate biodiversity considerations into development planning for the Eastern Steppe.*

Although ensuring conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the three Eastern *aimags* can only be assessed effectively in the long-term, it is obvious that the project has made important tangible progress towards attainment of this long-term objective.

To *promote and ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the protected areas and buffer zones in Eastern Mongolia*, the capacities of the relevant stakeholders (EMPAA, Buffer Zone Councils, *soum* Officials and Local communities) have been developed to integrate biodiversity issues in land use plans and implement land use policy, and to develop and implement PA and BZ management plans using participatory approaches. Guidelines for elaborating PA management plans have been drafted and a stakeholder workshop recommended their adoption by the Ministerial Council in December 2005. Regional and local capacities to prevent fires, mainly in the BZs, have been improved through training programs and workshops for fire departments, civil defense departments, and local governments, as well as increasing awareness of local populations and establishing

voluntary fire-fighting teams. As a result, fire occurrences have been reduced in the Protected Areas and their BZs.

In the BZs, the project supported community level activities with the support of the NCVs and the funding of the CCF to improve their livelihood while protecting wildlife resources and managing grasslands in a sustainable way. Populations and local governments have developed a sense of ownership, personal involvement and responsibility over the wildlife occurring on their territory which can be illustrated notably

- by the signature of individual contracts by local herders to respect the ban on marmot or on gazelle hunting and to protect them in the eastern *aimags*,
- by the establishment of trilateral agreements in 2 *soums* with BZ residents, *soum* government and BZ council, for the sustainable use of natural resources in the BZs,
- by the designation of local protected areas by two *soum* governments, and
- by the involvement of local people in voluntary fire-fighting and anti-poaching teams in the eastern *aimags*.

The incorporation of biodiversity considerations into development planning for the Eastern Steppe requires human capacity, appropriate knowledge on the natural resources, access to this knowledge by relevant actors and tools to facilitate this integration. The project has greatly contributed to develop capacities on all these aspects.

The project has contributed to knowledge development through research projects whose results and findings could be integrated into databases and management plans and practices, which could be readily implemented by local herder communities and local populations in *soum* centers. Knowledge on the PAs biodiversity was increased through the development of an inventory and monitoring methodology and the implementation of a 5-year inventory and monitoring program for 3 SPAs and 1 NR.

The project established a very powerful GIS tool, powerful in the sense that it could be easily implemented, accessed, and updated: a GIS including an environmental database and an interactive software operating in a Windows environment developed by the project to access, process, and update databases with research data and results, as well as data on illegal activities, and on land use in the eastern region. The project has supported the three eastern *aimag* governments, including their EPAs, SSSAs, Land Agencies, and the EMPAA with the establishment of their environmental databases and has provided training on the use of the GIS software. This tool has increased the capacity of the EMPAA to base decisions for the protection and sustainable management of biodiversity in the PAs and BZs on sound scientific knowledge.

In the Eastern *aimags*, the project significantly contributed to develop the capacities of the EPA, EMPAA, HMEM, SSSA, and the *aimag* and *soum* governments to use and update the databases and to integrate biodiversity issues into PA and BZ management plans, and land use plans at *soum* and *aimag* levels. The project also contributed to develop the capacities of herder communities to develop land use plans to improve their pasture condition (through rotational use) while protecting biodiversity. As an example, in order to monitor marmot populations, a community group in a *soum* center has made a map indicating the location of all marmot holes and the litter size for each.

The guidelines for planning land use at *soum* and *aimag* levels have been amended to integrate biodiversity considerations as mandatory and were adopted by the Land Agency. A pilot *soum* land use plan integrating biodiversity considerations, based on

Bayandun *soum* land use plan, has been prepared and was adopted by the Land Agency.

The public hearings to discuss the findings of the EIA on the construction of the Numrug Bridge in a section of the Numrug SPA were made possible with the project support. This first-ever exercise for public involvement in decision-making has been extensively publicized and has contributed to improve environmental governance in the country.

Immediate objectives

1. ***To ensure that the management of the seven existing protected areas in the Eastern Steppe is strengthened for effective protection of critical biodiversity within them.*** **(rating: S)**

The project contributed to set up two new protected areas (Shiliin Bogd Mountain and Horgiin hondii) and to upgrade the Ganga Lake Natural Monument to the status of Natural Reserve while expanding it by 31 596 ha. Yet, the project mostly endeavoured to strengthen the existing protected area system in the three Eastern *aimags* by drafting protected area management plans integrating results of scientific studies, strengthening EMPAA and PAs staff capacities including a certification course for rangers, and providing equipment and a GIS including an environmental database to improve PAs management.

PAs management plans. In the original scenario presented in the project document, it was expected that management plans would be finalized and implemented for all nine (9) protected areas in the three *aimags* of the Eastern Region. However, the 2003 TPR agreed that only the Numrug SPA management plan would be implemented as a model, thereby modifying the expected results regarding the implementation of all PA management plans. The objective was deemed unrealistic as baseline data had to be collected for 2 additional PAs and budgetary requirements to implement management plans had been underestimated. Management plans have been finalized, integrating comments from all relevant stakeholders. At the time the terminal evaluation was conducted, they were still not adopted by MNE, depriving the country from the use of these essential tools to protect its unique biodiversity in the Eastern Steppes.

It might have been advisable to adopt draft versions of the management plans according to the adaptive management principle, while recognizing they are preliminary or uncompleted, while keeping on conducting scientific studies, inventories and consultations to build up the knowledge basis required to improve the management plans to an acceptable level according to recognized international standards. This would have permitted to start implementing the most pressing measures to protect critical habitats for threatened species.

The implementation of the Numrug SPA management plan was evaluated by an independent team who concluded that 74% of planned activities had been completed by the end of 2004. The integrity of the territory of this SPA was threatened by a development project that included the construction of a bridge within its boundaries thus requiring declassifying part of the SPA. In collaboration with other stakeholders, the project organized a public hearing and a national forum to present the findings of the EIA on the proposed Numrug Bridge and to discuss the importance of PAs. As a result, the Parliament made the decision to refuse any proposal on declassifying existing PAs. All proposals for declassification of existing PA were denied.

Other expected results relative to this objective have been achieved and are detailed in section 4.3.1 on Project's main outputs. These results are shown in the following paragraphs.

Capacity development for the EMPAA staff (training and equipment) for the future implementation of the PA management plans and on monitoring of resource use.

Establishment of long-term monitoring and inventory systems, including a GIS environmental database, software and equipment. Knowledge on the PAs biodiversity was increased through the development of an inventory and monitoring methodology and the implementation of a 5-year inventory and monitoring program for 3 SPAs and 1 NR in Eastern Mongolia. EMPAA specialists and rangers have been trained in inventory and monitoring methods.

As stated in previous sections, the project established a very powerful GIS tool, including an environmental database and user-friendly interactive software to access, process, and update databases with research data and results, as well as data on illegal activities, and on land use in the eastern region. Capacities of the relevant users, including EMPAA, were developed in order to increase their capacity to use and update the GIS to base decisions for the protection and sustainable management of biodiversity in the PAs and BZs on sound scientific knowledge.

Acquisition and integration of scientific information through "research projects" to improve the relevance and efficiency of the PA management plans.

Conservation-oriented research: Five of the seven studies conducted for the improvement of the management of PAs were contributions to inventories: lake diatom flora inventory, herpetology and ichthyology studies in 3 lakes and 4 rivers, forest inventories in two PAs, red deer census, crane populations studies. Although these studies have increased the knowledge on Mongolian natural resources, it is not clear whether these projects were selected according to an integrated comprehensive strategy to build the required knowledge on main threats to biodiversity in each PA, or on priority or target species, to improve the management efficiency of the PAs (see Annex 6 for a list of the research projects designed to improve the management of the protected areas of the Eastern Steppes).

Conducting scientific research on natural resources may be expensive and time-consuming, even more so in Mongolia where animal populations of some globally rare or threatened species are scattered in remote and isolated locations, and where harsh winter climate shortens the effective period during which many research activities can be conducted. In the context of a development project, it is therefore essential to plan the research component based on a rigorous assessment of the research needs for the main purpose of devising management measures or approaches or improving existing ones, fulfilling the specific objectives of the PAs.

In a context where a lot of basic information is still lacking, such as population size and distribution for threatened or endangered species, and understanding of species critical habitat requirements and mortality factors, and where financial resources are limited, research planning should focus rigorously on providing the required information to improve the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation measures. It is necessary to prioritize and concentrate efforts on acquiring the critical knowledge needed to devise appropriate protection measures for the protected area target species or ecosystems, to be able to integrate it in the PA and BZ management plans and in the land use plans for areas outside PAs.

Evaluation based on project's indicators

The effectiveness of the measures to strengthen the system of the PAs in the three eastern *aimags* can be assessed through some indicators identified by the project:

Fires. In comparison to the annual average of 12 human-caused fires occurring within the boundaries of the SPAs for the years 1995 to 1999, the frequency of such occurrences has significantly reduced as shown by the figures below. For the period

mid-2004 to mid-2005, no human-caused fire had been reported within the boundaries of the SPAs in comparison to 15 fires reported for the *aimags* outside the PAs boundaries. However, important areas have been affected by steppe fires originating outside the boundaries of the PAs.

Years	1995-99	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Nb fires	12	---	4	12	2	0

Of the 12 fires observed in 2002, 7 had started in the Russian Federation to cross the border and 5 had started in Dornod *aimag*.

Vegetation cover. Natural vegetation cover as compared to the long-term average prior to 1999 (53% green): The index value for 2004 suggests that the vegetation cover has reduced by 9.5% in comparison to the long-term average. This reduction is correlated with fires, low precipitation and warm weather.

Illegal activities. Illegal activities reported in the PAs were significantly reduced from the start of the implementation of CCF activities in 2002 and 2003, until 2004 when reported cases of violations increased sharply.

Years	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Nb illegal actions	41	69	82	53	39	21	63

The increased number of arrests for illegal hunting or harvesting in 2004 may be misleading and must be interpreted with caution as improved patrolling may have resulted in an increase of the rate of violations reports, which should not be necessarily interpreted as an effective increase of illegal activities.

Indeed, the efficiency of patrolling was definitely improved as

- PA rangers have learned to select better route and timing for patrolling,
- Patrolling frequency was increased twofold in high risk areas,
- 16 voluntary community groups are increasing the patrolling efficiency and coverage,
- A network of local informants was set up amongst the communities.

2. To support biodiversity conservation and sustainable alternative livelihoods in the buffer zones of the protected areas. **(rating: HS)**

Buffer Zone Councils and management plans. Five representative buffer zone councils were established in line with the Law on Buffer Zones. They have been assisted to develop and implement management plans for PA Buffer Zones in the region following a participatory approach. 25 BZ council members were trained in participatory natural resource management and PRA techniques. The BZ councils are operational and meet on a quarterly basis. Buffer Zone Councils have been important partners to reach this second project objective, related to the development of sustainable alternative livelihoods and biodiversity conservation in the PA buffer zones. These structures ensured stakeholders' participation as they include representatives of local herders, local governments, and PA administration.

Five *soum* governments have contributed each MNT 300 000 to the BZ funds. Each of the BZ Councils has a revolving fund of MNT 20 million. By the end of 2004, the funds had provided 65 loans amounting to MNT 54.2 million and 14 grants totaling MNT 60 million to residents of the BZ. Interests gained from loans added up to MNT 2 million. By the end of 2005, 110 individuals had benefited loans of MNT 86.3 million from the BZ Support revolving fund and Buffer Zone Support Revolving Fund has increased from MNT 105 million to MNT 112 million.

The project raised public awareness on the importance of biodiversity conservation through multiple approaches, resulting in an increase of the understanding of the importance and concept of the buffer zones by the local authorities.

Community Conservation Activities.

In order to support biodiversity conservation and alternative livelihoods in the buffer zones of the protected areas, the project established a Community Conservation Fund. This fund assisted in the improvement of livelihoods of local communities in the PA BZ in the region through providing grants to develop innovative alternative livelihood projects. Community groups were created at the local level through the mobilization of volunteers who expected to benefit from the grants or loans from the CCF. These groups have received training and funding to improve or develop new subsistence or revenue generating activities in order to reduce their dependency upon unsustainable activities and to compensate for giving up prohibited activities.

76 small projects were implemented in 26 *soums* in the BZ of the SPAs of Eastern Mongolia, with grants to community groups adding up to MNT 412.9 million. The CCF projects were related to protection of rare and endangered species or of their habitat, sustainable use of natural resources, development of ecotourism, reduction of illegal hunting, establishment of environmental information centers, ecological education, forestation and tree nurseries, and establishment of a monitoring center for air pollution. One grant was allocated to protect a historical site.

This component played a key role in achieving the second objective of the project. In 2004, the monthly income of the 325 households involved in CCF projects had increased on average by MNT 18 000 as compared to 2002 and the CCF activities acting as incentives for local communities to participate in conservation activities in the region contributed to increase local population awareness on the importance of biodiversity conservation.

Unfortunately, the CCF was established and started to fund community projects only in 2002. Due to the late implementation of most CCF activities to develop livelihood options and the late organization of the communities into project implementing groups, it was not always possible to assess their financial sustainability not their effect in terms of reduction of threats to biodiversity.

As the CCF grants were provided to community groups, over 1300 individuals from 270 herder families have joined herder communities. According to the herders who were interviewed for the purpose of this evaluation, the creation of herder community groups to implement the CCF projects is a remarkably strong achievement. Because of the low density of the population in the countryside and the individualistic attitude of herders, they say they did not know each other prior to the project intervention. Trough the project and especially the CCF component, they discovered the benefits they could gain through solidarity and collaborating as community groups. In this context, the gers that were set up as “solidarity palace” in the countryside were especially appropriate as they provide a gathering place for people to hold meetings for social or environmental protection purposes.

26 herder groups are now cooperating to implement rotational use of about 2,000,000 ha of pastures. Over 1300 individuals from 270 herder families have joined herder communities and are cooperating to implement rotational use of pastures. Herders shared with the evaluation team that they had realized that they could not manage their pastures in a sustainable way without taking common decisions and actions, based on the carrying capacity of their pastures, and also that they could witness the improvement of their pasture condition when they did.

In the *soum* centers, 1570 individuals of 325 households have been involved in 32 project activities. On average, CCF beneficiaries represent 7.5% of *soum* population.

The monthly income of households involved in project activities increased on average from MNT 38 800 in 2002 to MNT 50 000 in 2004.

The CCF component contributed to enforce the capacity to manage BZs as the voluntary participation of local communities to 16 Community Patrolling Groups increased the monitoring efficiency to detect violations through conducting regular patrolling activities. In addition, a network of 153 local informants is active in 14 *soums*. Herders are also involved in the protection of marmots through individual contracts. More than 100 families in 4 *soums* have established agreements with local governments to manage marmot populations in and around their pastures.

Another important achievement attributable to the CCF projects is their contribution to protecting springs: 48 springs were protected with livestock closures and shrubs and bushes have been planted over a total of 4.5 ha for their natural protection.

The success of these CCF projects is largely attributable to the role played by the NCVs. Previously recruited as NUNVs, NCVs knowledge and skills have been developed to support community organization, lead community-based activities, and raise communities' awareness on biodiversity issues. Most of the 9 NCVs now run the CCF Community Centers in their location. As the project outreach agents, living and working with the local communities, NCVs have played a key role to ensure the consultation and participation of local stakeholders in the planning of BZ management plans and to ensure the dissemination of project's results and information to local communities. This outreach strategy was highly effective in developing a partnership between the project, local governments and local populations that will contribute to the sustainability of some of the main project outcomes.

Research projects

Some scientific studies, especially 4 of the management-oriented 10 studies on issues related to the management of the BZs, have provided really valuable information and a new understanding of ecological processes that could be applied to improve NRM in the BZs, mainly the studies on Brandt's vole population dynamics, on pasture condition and on hunting activities in the eastern *aimags*, and the marmot census. The findings of these studies were largely disseminated and discussed with relevant stakeholders and led to the formulation of recommendations that were integrated in regulations, law amendments, and management plans. The practical aspects of these recommendations were shared with herder communities who readily implemented them. Other studies have provided valuable information to improve planning and monitoring of the resources or land use.

Although the above-mentioned studies were successfully designed and achieved, other projects did not sufficiently target the improvement of BZ management plans. The relevance of the study on Daurian pikas is not clear. The study on Mongolian gazelles, conducted in collaboration with WCS, although by far the most expensive study, provided very little relevant information to improve the management of this species and assess the adequacy of the PAs to protect it. It appears that the research insufficiently integrated ecological variables with gazelle movement to gain a good understanding of their movements. The necessity to improve research planning according to the specific needs of management purposes was discussed under the analysis of the attainment of the first objective.

3. ***To incorporate and internalize components of biodiversity conservation into provincial and local development plans, so as to ensure the sustainability of activities and provide institutional frameworks for the replication of these initiatives. To support general measures for the long-term sustainability of all these efforts.*** (rating: S)

A) ***To incorporate and internalize components of biodiversity conservation into provincial and local development plans***

This component of the third project objective has already been discussed under the evaluation of the project's contribution to the development (long-term) objective in section 4.3.2 Attainment of objectives.

B) ***To support general measures for the long-term sustainability of all these efforts***

The rating for this outcome does not apply to the specific objective related to the establishment and replenishment of the METF, and the operation of its governance bodies, as these achievements were outside the project direct competence and did not depend on its performance.

The measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts include the setting up of a legal framework supporting the approaches that were developed throughout the project implementation (discussed under the section 4.1.2 in particular under "Outcomes incorporation into national / regional development plans and policies", and "Government approval of policies in line with the project objectives"), the development of the capacities required to implement these approaches has been extensively discussed throughout the report) and the establishment of a sustainable financing mechanism to support biodiversity conservation initiatives. The following discussion will focus on this third component.

Mongolia Environmental Trust Fund

In 1997, under the pilot phase of the project, a trust fund was created with the mission to fund projects that would contribute to the conservation and sustainable management of the land and its resources, including the diverse ecosystems, the wildlife and biodiversity of Mongolia and to the reduction of desertification in Mongolia. The fund raising goal was US$ 10 million which revenues were expected to exceed US$ 500 000 per year.

The project served as a frame to generate seed money for the METF. All activities related to the establishment of the METF and associated governance bodies were under the direct responsibility of the MNE and UNDP CO. UNDP showed its commitment towards the capitalization of the fund as financial contributions and repeated efforts to revitalize the operation of the METF management board. However, these efforts remained ineffective, owing to the lack of availability or commitment from its members.

The first table in the annex 7 presents the governance bodies involved and their expected and effective duties in the setting up, capitalization and management of the fund. It is shown that the management board and the fund administration office (Trust Fund Office) had not been fully operational and the TF office was closed at the end of 1999 due to lack of financial resources, that the financial advisory committee and the scientific and technical advisory committee were never formed, and that the asset manager was never appointed.

Another table in the same annex presents the successive steps or events that occurred throughout the project duration and that led to the actual situation. One key finding of the legal audit that was carried out in November 2005 is the expiration of the certificate of the Representative office in January 2001, which meant that the METF could not operate legally after this date. However, unaware of this situation, the Government of Norway, UNDP and the GEF contributed once more to the fund.

The GEF funding commitment according to the GEF/Trust Fund Grant Agreement expired in June 2005. According to this agreement, no withdrawal of funds from the income of the Foundation can be made and no income of the Foundation can be

used after June 30 2005 or any other date notified by UNDP to the Foundation. Explicit permission is required from UNDP HQ after this date.

The accumulated capital of the METF in the ABN AMRO account, as of end of October 2005, was US$ 1,213,502.25 including accrued interests of US$ 39,854.56.

The level of achievement for this part of the third outcome is clearly unsatisfactory. However, it must be restated here that the establishment and replenishment of the METF, and the operation of its governance bodies were outside the project direct competence and did not depend on its performance.

4.3.3. Sustainability

Financial resources (rating: S)

The project established a BZ Support Revolving Fund with a capital of MNT 105 million to create a sustainable financing mechanism contributing to replenish BZ Funds, thus helping local governments and BZ councils with the implementation of BZ management plans. This revolving fund provided more than MNT 1.3 million of funding resources to support the five BZ Councils. In addition, by the end of 2005, 110 individuals had benefited loans of MNT 86.3 million from the BZ Support revolving fund and, with the accrued interests, the BZ Support Revolving Fund had increased from MNT 105 million to MNT 112 million.

The project granted MNT 5.6 million as seed money to the BZ funds and local residents contributed MNT 2.8 million. Local contributions are important to ensure ownership and sustainability in the operation and management of the funds. Each of the buffer zone councils established a revolving fund to support income generation for the BZs and provide micro-credits to local residents of the BZ. Interests gained are used to finance natural resource management activities in the BZs. Each of the BZ Councils has a revolving fund of MNT 20 million to which *soum* governments have contributed. As they understood the importance of implementing the BZ management plans, five *soum* governments contributed each MNT 300 000 to the BZ funds. By the end of 2004, the BZ funds had provided 65 loans amounting to MNT 54.2 million and 14 grants totaling MNT 60 million to residents of the BZ. According to the records and information collected with the project and during field visits, borrowers respect deadlines and pay-back ratios are near 100% as people understand that they must pay back to become eligible to bigger loans, and to allow others to benefit from the loans. Interests gained from loans added up to MNT 2 million. The establishment of these funds and their sustainable management by the BZ councils is crucial to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project initiatives in the BZs.

Besides these funds set up with the project support, some communities having understood the advantages of solidarity efforts to build up and have a sum of money at the disposal of those who need it, have established their own local community funds to support the improvement of their people's livelihoods. The Dashbalbar BZ council has established its own environmental protection fund, showing the strong ownership of this community over its natural resources.

During the workshop facilitated by the project "Sustainable Financing of Conservation Activities", the Ministry of Finance agreed in principle to allocate a percentage of natural resource use fees, as specified in the Mongolian Law on Reinvestment of Natural Resource Use Fees for Conservation and Restoration of Natural Resources.

The lost opportunity to capitalize the METF is exposed in the previous section.

Stakeholder ownership (rating: HS)

The development of this project stakeholders' ownership is outstanding. All stakeholders met but one, from local populations, local government authorities and agencies, to *aimag* and central authorities and environmental agencies, were highly aware and appreciative of the project's benefits, outputs and outcomes.

The project outreach strategy in which NCVs played a key role was highly effective in developing the partnership between local governments and populations that will contribute to the sustainability of some of the main project outcomes. As NCVs are members of the local communities and members of the BZ Councils, they are most likely to remain in their locality. During the evaluation interviews, they have expressed an eager will to continue to carry out environmental protection actions and spread their knowledge and experience acquired through the project. Most of them have the intention of pursuing the work they initiated in the project framework, mainly the implementation of the BZ management plans, thereby contributing to the sustainability of the project outcomes. This group of local people (NCVs) constitutes a capacity that was developed by the project to establish a missing link between local communities and local governments and agencies, and that will continue to disseminate environmental information and knowledge at the local level.

Stakeholders' ownership of the local populations in the BZs is illustrated notably

- by the signature of individual contracts by local herders to respect the ban on marmot or on gazelle hunting and to protect them in the eastern *aimags*,
- by the signature of contracts by herder communities to protect pastures and biodiversity in their environment,
- by the establishment of trilateral agreements in 2 *soums* with BZ residents, *soum* government and BZ council, for the sustainable use of natural resources in the BZs,
- by the designation of local protected areas by two *soum* governments, and
- by the involvement of local people in voluntary fire-fighting and anti-poaching teams in the eastern *aimags*.

Institutional framework and governance (rating: S)

Community groups. The CCF component of the project involved the voluntary establishment of community groups for herders as well as *soum* residents as this was a condition to benefit from financial support (loans or grants) to carry out activities to improve their livelihood while participating in biodiversity conservation in their *soum*. The project contributed to prepare the amendments to the Law on Environmental Protection that provide a legal recognition of community groups as "user groups" operating on a contract basis to conserve, own and use specific natural resources in a sustainable manner, and define their rights and responsibilities.

Buffer Zone Councils. The project contributed to establish the 5 BZ Councils according to the Law on Buffer Zones and to strengthen their capacities in participatory planning, implementation of the buffer zone management plans, and monitoring of resource use. Buffer Zone Councils are participatory management committees elected for each BZ and including representatives of local herders, local governments, and PA administration. Their responsibility is to elaborate, monitor and execute the BZ management plans following a participatory approach with the support of the BZ funds, and to develop alternative livelihood options with the support of the community conservation fund (CCF).

Public hearings. Public hearings to discuss the findings of the EIA on the construction of the Numrug Bridge were made possible with the project support. This first-ever exercise for public involvement in decision-making has been extensively publicized

and has contributed to improve the transparency of environmental decision-making and governance in the country.

4.3.4. Management of protected areas (using GEF "Tracking tools" to assess protected areas management effectiveness)

Effectiveness of the PAs management was assessed in July 2005 by the project manager and a specialist from EMPAA using the GEF tracking tool. The completed document is presented as a separate appendix to this report. Overall scores varied between 65 and 66 except for the Numrug protected area which was rated at 68. Besides the fact that management plans had not yet been adopted except for the Numrug PA, common gaps were in terms of capacity to enforce PA legislations and regulations, financial resources to implement management plans, and appropriate visitor facilities. Areas for improvement of the process include staff management, training and number, and maintenance of equipment and facilities. Planning could be improved in particular through the elaboration of annual work plans, increasing the contribution of local people to management decisions, and enhancing the integration of knowledge acquired through monitoring for improving the management of ecosystem. Another area that requires improvement is related to the flow of benefits to local people.

4.3.5. Main findings – most significant achievements of the project

The participatory planning and implementation approach and capacity building at all levels was an especially effective approach to develop stakeholders ownership to the project objectives and to develop sustainable partnerships, cooperation and communication. The project played a strong role of coordination amongst various stakeholders to strengthen the BZ councils and permit the implementation of the BZ Law which was adopted in 1996.

Development of solidarity amongst herders As the CCF grants were provided to community groups, over 1300 individuals from 270 herder families have joined herder communities. According to the herders who were interviewed for the purpose of this evaluation, the creation of herder community groups to implement the CCF projects is a remarkably strong achievement. Because of the low density of the population in the countryside and the individualistic attitude of herders, they say they did not know each other prior to the project intervention. Trough the project and especially the CCF component, they discovered the benefits they could gain through solidarity and collaborating as community groups. The setting up of 22 community-unifying gers or "solidarity palace" was an appropriate measure that was especially adapted to the nomadic lifestyle of herders.

Another great achievement of the project was to link community-based conservation to improved livelihood with well defined community groups who got involved on a voluntary basis in natural resource protection as they learned about the wildlife in their environment and developed a sense of ownership to it. This was accomplished through developing incentives such as alternative income generating activities to improve local people's livelihood, increasing all stakeholders' awareness on the importance of conserving biodiversity, their knowledge on biodiversity resources and their awareness of the beauty or their environment beyond its economical value. Examples of this include local people participation in the conservation and monitoring of marmots through contracts formalizing individual responsibilities, in the protection of cranes, of gazelles, and in spring protection through fencing and plantations.

Improvement of the capacity to expose illegal hunting. Another major outcome of this project results from the study on the impact of hunting on wildlife populations in the Eastern *aimags*. As the results of this study were pointing to the lack of enforcement

of the Law on Hunting, a project was developed based on a close collaboration of the SSSA and the ESBP to propose amendments to the Law on Hunting and implement a tagging system to prove that products were hunted legally. The hunting study findings have been used to develop policies and legislation and a new tagging system was successfully implemented in 2003. According to the amendment to the Law on Hunting adopted by the Mongolian Parliament, everyone who possesses a wildlife product is required to have an official certificate of origin to prove that it has been hunted legally. It enables the law enforcement personnel to inspect traders at major road checkpoints, markets, and border ports, and to confiscate products of illegally hunted wildlife. The Director of the Environmental Inspection Department of the SSSA reported that about a hundred thousand marmot skins without tags had been confiscated at traders warehouses in Ulaanbaatar before being shipped illegally to China.

Ecological control of Brandt's vole populations. The project was successful at understanding the rodent population dynamics in relation to ecological conditions and at applying the findings of the study to devise an ecological approach to control the rodent populations. The approach includes measures to favour its natural predators (ex. construction of bird poles, and bans on fox hunting) and the improvement of pasture management to avoid conditions that lead to rodent populations outbreaks. Local herders participation is fundamental to implement the ecological control of Brandt's voles, and the project was successful at raising their awareness and understanding to promote their active involvement. Now, in the 3 eastern *aimags*, Brandt's voles are no more a problem and the use of Bromadiolone (rodenticide) that was harmful to humans and to the biodiversity in the region has been banned.

Preventive approach for fire management. In order to support the *soums*, more particularly those located in PA Buffer Zones, with capacity building and enhancing public awareness on fire prevention, the ESBP further developed the model *soum* fire management plan initiated by the GTZ fire prevention project and distributed it to the three eastern *aimags* and their *soums* Governor's offices and Land Use agencies. Regional and local capacities to prevent fires have been improved through training programs and workshops for fire departments, civil defense departments, and local governments.

GIS environmental database. The project developed and established a very powerful GIS tool including a comprehensive environmental database and interactive software operating in a Windows environment to access, process, and update databases. Database includes data on biodiversity, illegal activities, and on land use in the eastern region. The project assisted the three eastern *aimag* governments, including their EPAs, SSSAs, Land Agencies, and the EMPAA with the establishment of their environmental databases and has provided training on the use of the GIS software. This support was especially effective to increase the EMPAA and *aimag* capacities for planning purpose and to base decisions on sound scientific knowledge.

Advocacy of biodiversity conservation. The project had a strong influence on high-level decisions. For example, the project contributed to organize the 1st public hearings in the country, to the implementation of the tag system to improve the enforcement of the Law on Hunting, to stopping commercial hunting of gazelles, and to ban marmot and fox commercial hunting for a period of time, and made proposals to create new natural reserves.

4.3.6. Contribution to upgrading skills of the national staff

Biodiversity concept. When the project was first implemented, the concept of biodiversity was not yet known in Mongolia. The project contributed to disseminate this concept as well as the importance of conserving it through PAs and their BZs,

and other measures outside PAs to all population in the eastern steppes, reaching young people, their biology teachers and local authorities in *soum* centers, *aimag* environmental agencies and authorities, as well as herders in remote locations. Biodiversity now means a lot and is valued by all these people.

Project staff. In the early stages of the project implementation, most of the project staff was young and inexperienced. The project contributed greatly to develop their capacities and gain practical experience in the field of community-based biodiversity conservation and natural resource management, through the advice and supervision of the international advisors and national project coordinator and manager, gradual taking over responsibilities and getting involved in the participatory planning and evaluation of the workplans.

Project stakeholders. The participatory planning and evaluation of the workplans also contributed to increase the capacities of all the institutional stakeholders that were involved, as they testified during the interviews.

NCVs. NCVs have been empowered significantly in terms of their knowledge and skills to support community organization and lead community-based activities and most of the 9 NCVs run the CCF Community Centers. With the support of the NCVs and of the CCF activities, local communities have acquired knowledge on forming community groups and mutual support groups to improve their livelihood while protecting natural resources.

National academic institutions. The project collaboration with the national academic institutions was mostly related to the implementation of the research projects. The collaboration could have had a better potential for nation-wide replication if capacity development activities in the field of biodiversity conservation had been implemented in partnership with national academic institutions and if biodiversity concepts and issues had been integrated in the curriculum of their trainings in biology.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Recommendations for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project

Adoption of preliminary management plans according to the adaptive management approach: The fact that the PA management plans were not adopted deprived the country from the use of these essential tools to protect its unique biodiversity in the Eastern Steppes. It might have been advisable to adopt draft versions of the management plans according to the adaptive management principle, while recognizing they are preliminary or uncompleted, while keeping on conducting scientific studies, inventories and consultations to build up the knowledge basis required to improve the management plans to an acceptable level according to recognized international standards. This would have permitted to start implementing the most pressing measures to protect critical habitats for threatened species.

Project management: The implementation of the project must be guided through a logical framework indicating, for each expected outcome (not output), result indicators (limited number and integrated), direct and indirect beneficiaries (with whom result assessment should be conducted), and hypothesis / risks.

The *monitoring* of the progression of activities based on expected targets and outputs, on one side, and the *evaluation* of the level of attainment of expected outcomes and impacts (expected results for immediate and development objectives) on the other side, must be the products of distinct processes, the logical framework being the appropriate reference document to guide the evaluation of outcomes and impacts.

Coordination and planning of conservation-oriented research:

In a context where a lot of basic information is still lacking, such as population size and distribution for threatened or endangered species, and understanding of species critical habitat requirements and mortality factors, research planning must focus rigorously on providing the required information to improve the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation measures. It is necessary to prioritize and concentrate efforts on acquiring the critical knowledge needed to devise appropriate protection measures for the protected area target species or ecosystems, to be able to integrate it in the PA and BZ management plans and in the land use plans for areas outside PAs.

Until now, the project has played a coordination role between national scientific institutions, PA managers, and other stakeholders including local populations, and has provided the needed financial resources. There is a need to further the coordination of research with management and fund raising to devise a comprehensive research program for the eastern region, and ensure that research findings will answer future priority management needs. This coordination could be ensured by resorting to an *ad hoc* or permanent multi-stakeholder advisory committee which composition should include all relevant stakeholders, such as representatives of Governments, private sector, research institutions, ministries, project staff, local populations and associations, national NGOs, and PA managers.

Other: Recommendations include the adoption of the project's exit strategy (section 5.2) and the expansion of positive lessons learned (section 6).

5.2. Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project

As the project was coming to its end, a seminar was held in September 2004 to report on and evaluate the results of the activities undertaken by the project and herder communities with the support of the CCF and to share lessons learned. It was shown that the project had played a strong role of coordination amongst various stakeholders to strengthen the BZ councils to implement the BZ Law, with the purpose of conserving biodiversity within PAs and their BZs while improving local residents' livelihoods in the eastern region. It became evident to the participants that an exit strategy had to be implemented to maintain this coordination and ensure the sustainability of the project outcomes, building upon the capacities that were developed during the project implementation.

The participants made a recommendation to establish an association to take over from the project. The project CCF Manager and NCVs were assigned to follow up the recommendation. According to the recommendation, the Eastern Mongolian Community Conservation Association (EMCCA) was created as a NGO and registered in May 2005.

In November 2005, a meeting was held in Choibalsan with the project field office staff members including NCVs and local stakeholders and the UNDP Environmental Practice Manager to discuss the best approach to maintain the project's achievement building upon project's human (NCVs), technical (equipment) and financial (BZ revolving fund) investments.

Therefore, to meet the objective to sustain the project's achievements through ensuring the monitoring of CCF activities, the management of the revolving fund to implement BZ management plans and support National Community Volunteers activities, two options were considered:

1. Hand over all the activities and equipment to the EMPAA

2. Hand over the management of the revolving fund and some equipment to the environmental NGO Eastern Mongolian Community Conservation Association (EMCCA)

The advantages and disadvantages of both options were discussed with all stakeholders, including representatives of EMPAA and EMCAA.

1. Hand over all the activities and equipment to the EMPAA

Advantages: EMPAA is able to continue the project activities

Disadvantages:
- Frequent changes of the EMPAA personnel,
- Limitation of conservation activities restricted to the Protected Areas, leaving out other parts of three eastern *aimags* where the project activities are already implemented,
- Lack of capacity to handle large groups of stakeholders.

2. Hand over the management of the revolving fund and some equipment to the environmental NGO Eastern Mongolian Community Conservation Association (EMCCA)

Advantages:
- The Association is able to continue the project activities,
- The Association includes NCVs capacities and experiences gained throughout the project implementation, as well as a network of herder communities,
- The CCF project implementing teams (community groups) are already established and operating their activities in the eastern region,
- The establishment and operation of an environmental association in the eastern region will positively impact the environmental conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

A consensus was reached amongst all participants to the meeting that the EMCCA would be the best implementing organization to ensure the sustainability of project activities and outcomes in the future.

A document was written stating the objectives and scope of the activities that would be carried out by the NGO, taking into account EMCAA human resource and potential technical and financial resources, which were also detailed. After having examined the document, the evaluation team also supports the decision that gained the consensus of all stakeholders.

6. LESSONS LEARNED

Establishment of a network of partners. The multi-level partnership strategy adopted by the project to ensure the sustainability of its outcomes proved to be appropriate. It was especially successful at establishing a network of partners at all levels from local herders and communities, buffer zone councils, local governments, to *aimag* administrations, and developing their capacities and sense of ownership over biodiversity and the environment at large. The project was designed to develop the capacities of relevant stakeholders through various training activities and participatory processes and support them in carrying out the activities as their capacities would expand.

Participatory planning and implementation. The participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation involving all relevant project stakeholders, including the 2 project offices, NCVs, staff from EMPAA, EPA, SSSA, , Land Authority, environmental offices in the 3 *aimags*, and implemented in 2002 resulted in a significant improvement of the planning and implementation of activities. It contributed to increase stakeholders' capacities and to shorten the overall planning process.

Meetings were successively organized in the eastern three *aimags* and Ulaanbaatar in order to actively involve local partners. Joint evaluation and reporting on work performance and joint planning of activities, allowed building common understanding and consensus amongst project staff and stakeholders which contributed greatly to team building and to improve motivation to implement planned activities. This strong participatory planning definitely contributed to enhance the development of a successful partnership strategy that ensures the sustainability of major project outcomes.

Volunteerism as an outreach strategy to involve and empower local communities and link them to the local governments. The project outreach strategy involving NCVs was highly effective in developing the partnership between the project, local governments and local populations that will contribute to the sustainability of some of the main project outcomes. As NCVs are members of the local communities and members of the BZ Councils, they are most likely to remain in their locality. During the evaluation interviews, they have expressed an eager will to continue to carry out environmental protection actions and spread their knowledge and experience acquired through the project. Some of them have established, on their own initiative, environmental NGOs, with the purpose of pursuing the work they initiated in the project framework, mainly the implementation of the BZ management plans, thereby ensuring the sustainability of, and furthering the project outcomes. This group of local people (NCVs) constitutes a capacity that was developed by the project to establish a missing link between local communities and local governments and agencies, and that will continue to disseminate environmental information and knowledge at the local level. This successful approach deserves to be replicated and expanded for the implementation of similar community-based NRM projects.

Mobile public campaign for remote sparsely populated areas In the Mongolian countryside, the scattering of herders' settlements over vast areas represents a challenge to organize efficient outreach activities and deliver attractive information to local people. Therefore, the project developed a mobile public campaign to reach communities established in remote areas, the Gazelle car being an efficient method to reach people living sparsely over large areas where gathering them is a difficult task.

Steering committee. The establishment of a project steering committee is essential to provide policy guidance and to help solve implementation problems and reduce risks of polarization when problems such as a lack of common understanding of project objectives arise amongst major project partners.

ANNEXES

1. Terms of Reference
2. Itinerary of field visits
3. List of persons interviewed
4. List of documents reviewed
5. Guiding document for interviews based on project outcomes
6. List of research projects

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE[1]
FINAL EVALUATION FOR "IMPROVED CAPACITY OF NATIONAL/SECTORAL AUTHORITIES TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT APPROACHES TO ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT THAT NEEDS TO THE POOR"
OR THE EASTERN STEPPES BIODIVERISTY PROJECT
(MON/97/G32 and MON/98/301)

1. Background

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts; ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and iii) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned. A mix of tools is used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project – e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators, or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term reviews, audit reports and final evaluations.

In accordance with UNDP/GEF M&E policies and procedures, all regular and medium-sized projects supported by the GEF should undergo a final evaluation upon completion of implementation. A final evaluation of a GEF-funded project (or previous phase) is required before a concept proposal for additional funding (or subsequent phases of the same project) can be considered for inclusion in a GEF work program. However, a final evaluation is not an appraisal of the follow-up phase.

Final evaluations are intended to assess the relevance, performance and success of the project. It looks at early signs of potential impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development and the achievement of global environmental goals. It will also identify/document lessons learned and make recommendations that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects.2

With financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Ministry of Nature and Environment (MNE) of the Government of Mongolia has been executing the project to conserve biodiversity in the grasslands of eastern Mongolia since June 1998. The stated objectives of the projects are to strengthen (1) the management of existing protected areas in the eastern steppes, (2) the development of sustainable livelihoods in buffer zones and (3) the integration of biodiversity conservation efforts in local development plans.

All UNDP projects in Mongolia are implemented under National Execution (NEX) modality. In the case of this project NEX by the Ministry of Nature and Environment (MNE) was suspended in 2001 because of implementation problems. The UNDP CO received HQ clearance for UNDP direct execution, which was not applied on the reasons of best interest of the project and UNDP-government partnership. MNE, UNDP and GEF through the mediation of the UNDP had been negotiating with UNOPS until March 2004 when at a TPR meeting in Ulaanbaatar, the parties agreed on the terms of UNOPS execution.

Throughout this period the project team continued to work to carry out the planned activities in collaboration with international, national and local partners achieving their workplan targets in protected area management, law and policy lobbying and community livelihood promotion.

2. Objectives of Evaluation

The stated end date for the project is … November 2005 and hence MNE, UNOPS and UNDP Mongolia are initiating as agreed at the last TPR in March 2004 this evaluation to assess the progress of the project in achieving its objectives. The evaluation shall determine to what extent the project has improved environmental planning and management and benefited communities at the local level over the past seven years.

3. Scope of Evaluation

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[1] These TORs follow the evaluation guidelines of the UNDP/GEF booklet "Measuring and Demonstrating Impact" available on the UNDP intranet website (last accessed: 28 June 2005).
[2] These three paragraphs are the standard introduction for final evaluations (as per source mentioned in Footnote 1).

The evaluation shall review the operations of the entire project (MON/97/G32 and MON/98/301) in the Eastern Steppes and Ulaanbaatar over 25 working days.

4. Issues to be addressed by Evaluation

A. The project staff has worked over the past seven years to improve the management of protected areas in the Eastern Steppes, promote alternative livelihoods for local communities and lobby government to implement effective environmental policies. The evaluation shall hence assess the project's attainment of global environmental objectives, outcomes/impacts, project objectives, and delivery and completion of project outputs/activities. The evaluation of the project's achievements shall be according to the GEF Project Review Criteria[3]: Implementation approach; country ownership/driveness, stakeholder participation/public involvement, sustainability, replication approach, financial planning, cost-effectiveness and monitoring and evaluation (some of these are elaborated below in points D, E and F). The evaluation shall include ratings of these criteria of highly satisfactory, satisfactory, marginally satisfactory, unsatisfactory and n/a.
B. The evaluation team shall assess the management of protected areas supported by the project by a GEF introduced "Tracking Tools". The tracking tool has two sections. Section one provides background and coverage information on the project, and section two provides an assessment of protected area management effectiveness. (Annex ….)
C. The evaluation shall analyze main findings, lessons learned and extract best practices modeled by the project. The final report shall also describe the most significant achievements of the project. Any disagreements between the findings of the evaluation team, the IA/EA or the GEF recipient organization shall be explained in an annex.
D. The project has involved an array of international and national partners to achieve its objectives. The evaluation shall determine the adequacy of the support provided to the project by the UNDP country office, the MNE including the Eastern Mongolia Protected Area Administration (EMPAA) and *aimag* governments. Have the partnerships been appropriate and fully utilized to achieve the objectives?
E. The evaluation shall review national and local policies with regard to conservation and development and determine the contribution made by the project for long-term conservation. The analysis should also document the challenges faced by the project that may have impeded successful implementation (factors beyond the control of the project).
F. The project has spent over US $.... million as of … 2005. The evaluation should determine if the project inputs such as training, public awareness campaigns, sub-contracts, personnel and equipment have been appropriate, managed wisely and used effectively.
G. The evaluation shall explore future options of assistance by GEF and UNDP in the Eastern Steppes to strengthen and augment the work done by this project.

5. Products Expected from the Evaluation

The evaluation shall report on the lessons learned from the project focusing on protected area management, community livelihood models and environmental policy and planning. The evaluation shall also report on the opportunities for future assistance for the protection of the Eastern Steppes.

6. Evaluation Approach

The work will be divided between review of documentation and interviews with stakeholders in Ulaanbaatar, Choibalsan and rural centers. The evaluation team shall undertake the following tasks:

1. Review background documents in the project files including but not limited to the following:
   - Mid-term Review Report of August 2001
   - Project Document of June 1998
   - Annual Project Reports (APRs)
   - Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs)
   - Annual and Quarterly Workplans
   - Final Consultancy Report by Keith Metzner of March 2004
   - Correspondences between UNDP, MNE and UNOPS
   - SRF/ROAR of the UNDP CO
   - Audit Reports on ESBP

[3] These are mostly based on the GEF Council paper: GEF Project Cycle (GEF/C.16/Inf.7).

2. Locate and review additional documentation regarding the policy environment but not limited to the following:

- Dornod International Protected Area Agreement (1994)
- Mongolian Action Programme for the XXI Century (1998)
- Biodiversity Action Plan (1997)
- Management Plan for Protected Areas (1997)
- Mongolia Environment Monitor of the World Bank
- Mongolia State of the Environment 2002
- National Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan
- The Government of Mongolia Good Governance for Human Security Programme
- Dornod Protected Area Management Plan

3. Arrange a schedule of meetings in Ulaanbaatar and interview people both inside and outside of the project to collect their views on the policy environment and the implementation of the project. These people should include but not be limited to representatives from the following organizations:

1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1 Government

- Ministry of Nature and Environment (MNE)
- Ministry of Food and Agriculture
- Ministry of Infrastructure
- Hydro-Meteorological and Environmental Monitoring Agency
- State Specialized Inspection Agency
- Administration of Land Affairs, Geodesy and Cartography

1.1.1.1.1.1.1.2 International Organizations

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Asian Development Programme (ADB)

1.1.1.1.1.1.1.3 Bilateral Organizations

- USAID

1.1.1.1.1.1.1.4 Non-Governmental Organizations

- Consortium of Mongolian Environmental NGOs
- Mongolian Association for Conservation of Nature and Environment (MACNE)
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
- Union of Mongolian NGOs (UMENGO)
- IPECON

4. Undertake a site visit to the Eastern Steppes Region (Dornod, Khentii and Sukhbaatar *aimags*) to review additional documentation and conduct additional interviews. Meet with project staff in Choibalsan to receive a general briefing on conservation and development in the Eastern Steppes and meet also with and interview representatives of the following organizations:

- Governments of Dornod, Khentii and Sukhbaatar
- Protected Area Administration of the Eastern Steppes
- Community Conservation Fund beneficiaries

5. Present a report covering major findings and recommendations to UNDP, UNOPS, MNE and the project staff.
6. Based on the above consultations, prepare a written Draft Report on the findings of the mission of not less than 25 pages, excluding annexes.
7. Based on feedback provided by these organizations and any additional information collected revise and finalize the report as appropriate based on these comments.
8. Submit ten copies of the final, bound report to UNDP for distribution. Include an electronic copy of the report in MS Word.

7. Evaluation Team

The evaluation team shall consist of two members: one independent international consultant and two independent national consultants.

The international consultant will be the team leader and should have an advanced university degree and at least 15 years of work experience in the field of sustainable environment, sound knowledge about results-based management (especially results-oriented monitoring and evaluation). S/he should be familiar with UNDP/GEF projects and GEF policies and strategies and have some familiarity with

Mongolia. The team leader will take the overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the evaluation report in English.

The national experts shall have a degree related to environmental management and be familiar with the environmental conditions in rural and urban Mongolia. S/he shall have work experience with international development programs, preferably with UNDP. Ability to travel to rural Mongolia required. Working knowledge of English and computer literacy preferred.

8. Implementation Arrangements

The assessment will be carried out over 25 working days in November-December 2005. The work will commence on … and be completed by …. A preliminary workplan is shown in the following table:

No.	Task				
1,2.	Review project documents				
3.	Meet with UNDP, MNE, Project Staff				
3.	Meet with Stakeholders in UB				
4.	Field Trip to Eastern Steppes				
4.	Meet with Stakeholders outside of UB				
5.	Present Findings to UNDP and MNE				
6.	Draft Report				
7.	Finalize Report				

The ESBP project staff shall provide any necessary logistical support. The staff will assembly the suggested documents and prepare for the field trip. The evaluation team shall use the office space of the ESBP project. Team members are expected to bring their own computers/laptops for the written work. The mission will produce the following deliverables by the dates specified:

- A draft report by ….
- A final report by …

The mission should submit 10 paper copies of the final report together with one electronic copy.

Annex 2. Itinerary of field visits

Trip Agenda to Conservation of Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood options in the Grasslands of Eastern Mongolia Project area from the 3rd to 14th of December 2005.

Date	Location	Meetings
03 December	UB to Choibalsan, Dornod *Aimag*	
04 December	Choibalsan	Meeting with ESBP staff and all NCVs
05 December		Meeting with Dornod *Aimag* Governor
		Meeting with EMPAA staff
06 December		Meeting with Khentii *Aimag* Officials
		Meeting with project NCV, CCF project team members and introduction of CCF project implementation
		Meeting with project stakeholders. (Dornod *Aimag* EA, Land Agency, SSA, HMEMC)
07 December		Meeting with project stakeholders. (Dornod *Aimag* EA, Land Agency, SSA, HMEMC)
	Choibalsan, Dornod *Aimag* to Sukhbaatar *Aimag*	
08 December	Sukhbaatar *Aimag*	Meeting with Sukhbaatari *Aimag* Governor.
		Meeting with project stakeholders. (Sukhbaatar *Aimag* EA, Land Agency, SSA, HMEMC)
		Introduction of CCF project implementation
09 December	Dariganga *soum,* Sukhbaatar *Aimag*	Meeting with Dariganga National Park Administration staff
		Meeting with Dariganga *Soum* Governor.
		Introduction of CCF project implementation
10 December	Erdenetsagaan *soum,* Sukhbaatar *Aimag*	Meeting with Erdenetsagaan NCV. Mr Bat-Erdene and CCF project Team members
		Meeting with Erdenetsagaan *Soum* Governor
		Introduction of CCF project implementation
		Introduction of Zegstei herding community activities
	Erdenetsagaan *Soum* to Matad *Soum* Dornod *Aimag*	Introduction of Environmental Info Center and CCF project implementation. (Tavan-Erdene women's wool processing community)
	Matad to Choibalsan	
11-13 December, 2005	Choibalsan to Dashbalbar *Soum*, Dornod *Aimag*	Meeting with Dashbalbar NCV. Mr Chinbat and CCF project Team members
		Meeting with Dashbalbar *Soum* Governor. Mr Yondonjamts
		Introduction of Undral herding community activities
		Introduction of Chukh Lake herding community activities
		Meeting with CCF project Team members and introduction of CCF
		Meeting with Gurvanzagal *Soum* Governor Project implementation (Environmental Info Center and Community Café)
14 December	Choibalsan to UB	

Annex 3. List of persons interviewed

Name and position	Organization
Ulaanbaatar	
Ms. Oyundar, Director General, GEF Operational Focal Point	Strategic Planning and Policy Coordination Department, MNE
Dr. A. Namkhai, Director	Special Protected Area Administration Department, MNE
Dr. M. Erdenetuya	National Remote Sensing Center - Information and Computer Center
Dr. Banzragch T.	State Specialized Inspection Agency, Environment and Mining Inspection, Deputy Director of Nature
Mr. L. Bold, Chairman	Ministry of Trade and Industry, Mineral Resources and Petroleum Authority
Mrs. J. Jargal	National University of Mongolia – Biology Faculty
Mr. D. Dagvasuren, Project Manager	Eastern Steppe Biodiversity Project, UNDP/GEF
Ms. D. Odonchimeg, Project Coodinator	
Mr. P. Tsogtsaikhan, Management Plan Officer	
Mr. T. Ankhbayar, GIS Officer	
Mr. Gankhuyag, CCF Manager	
Mr. Enkhbold S., Research Officer	
Mr. O. Chuluunbaatar, Driver	
Dr. C. Enkhzaya, Adviser to the Chairman	Mineral Resources and Petroleum Authority, Ministry of Trade and Industry
Ms. Tungalag, Environment Cluster Manager	UNDP CO in Mongolia
Ms. Batkhishig, Program Officer	
Mr. Galragchaa, Senior Officer, Environmental Specialist	GTZ
Mr. Chimid-Ochir, Director	WWF Mongolia Programme Office
Dr. J. Batbold	Union of Mongolian Environmental NGOs (UMENGO)
Mr. Gankhuyag R., Head of Cadastral Division	Mongolian Governmental Regulatory Agency – Administration of Land Affairs, Geodesy and Cartography
Mr. Khurelshagai A., Deputy Head, Mongolian Governmental Regulatory Agency	Administration of Land Affairs, Geodesy and Cartography – Land Management, Geodesy and Cartography Department
Dornod *aimag*	
Mr. Ts. Janlav, Governor	Dornod *aimag*
Mr. Kh. Dashdorj, Head	Eastern Mongolia Protected Area Administration
Mr. Z. Tserenbaltav, Officer	
Mr. B. Batdorj, Officer	
Mr. B. Delgermaa, Officer	
Mr. J. Ulziitumur, Ranger	
Mr. T. Lhamsuren Accountant	
Mr. D. Damdinbazar, Head	Land Agency
Mr. L. Lhundev, Senior Officer	
Mr. Sh. Ganbat, Head	Nature and Environment Agency
Mr. D. Khuyagbaatar, Officer	
Mr. N. Khishigjargal, Head	Meteorological Research Center
Mr. Sh. Ulziiduuren, Head	Matad *soum*, Buffer Zone Council
Ms. E. Tumurbaatar, Teacher	Matad *soum*, Young Rangers' Community
E. Purevdorj, Member	Matad *soum*, Buffer Zone Council
Kh. Nyambuu, Head	Matad *soum*, Bayanburd Herders' Group
Ch. Batjargal, Herder	
T. Dolgormaa, Trainer	
J. Yondonjamts, Governor	Dashbalbar *soum*
D. Jambaldorj, Head	Dashbalbar *soum*, *Soum* Citizens Khural Representatives

Name and position	Organization
D. Gankhuyag, Secretary	
Ch. Chinbat, NCV	Dashbalbar *soum*
D. Delgermaa, Member	Buffer zone council
G. Tserenbat, Inspector	Marmot Protection Project
S. Dulamkhand, Member	Herders' Community "Undral"
Ms Ch. Gereltsetseg, Teacher	"Swan" Children Club
M. Dolgor, Member	Buffer zone council
Ch. Urjinkhand, Head	"Chukh" Herders community
D. Andrei, Herder	
B. Byambajav, Herder	
B. Byambadorj, Herder	
D. Gulgun, Herder	
J. Jamyan, Herder	
B. Batbayar, Herder	
M. Jargal, Herder	
B. Boroldoi, Herder	
E. Tsendsuren, Herder	
J. Tsendmaa, Herder	
Ch. Tsogzolmaa, Herder	
L. Sergelen, Chairperson	Gurvanzagal *soum*, Citizens Khural Representatives
S. Byambaa, Head	Marmot protection "Zagal" group
U. Dorjsukhbaatar, Member	Marmot protection "Zagal" group
Khentii *aimag*	
T. Chinzorig, Head	Development support fund, NGO
M. Bulgan, NCV	Khentii *aimag*
J. Tsagaachin. NCV	Khentii *aimag*, Bayan Ovoo *soum*
Kh. Purevdorj, Head	Bayan Ovoo *soum*, "Esun Erdene" Herders Group
Ts. Shinechimeg, Officer	Khentii *aimag*, Land Agency
N. Oyunmandal, Officer	Khentii *aimag*, Environment Protection Agency
Sukhbaatar *aimag*	
R. Erdenetsogt, Governor	Sukhbaatar *aimag*
S. Borgil, Head	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Environment protection Agency
Kh. Enkhbayar, Head	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Meteorological Agency
N. Munkhbaatar, Officer	
D. Batkhurel, Senior Officer	Sukhbaatar *aimag* Government, Strategic Planning Department
U. Tsetsegdelger, Officer	Sukhbaatar *aimag* Government, Land Agency
B. Enkhtuya, Officer	Sukhbaatar *aimag* Government, State Specialized Inspection Agency
M. Delkhiitsetseg, NCV	Sukhbaatar *aimag*
U. Maral, Member	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Junior Environmental Club
D. Dugarsuren, Head	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Dariganga *soum*, National Park
T. Bayarmagnai, Technician	
D. Gantulga, Officer	
T. Sukhbaatar, Accountant	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Dariganga *soum*, National Park
U. Batsaikhan, Governor	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Erdenetsagaan *soum*
O. Enkhtuya, Chairperson	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Erdenetsagaan *soum*, Citizens Khural Representatives
Z. Zembe, Vice Governor	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Erdenetsagaan *soum*
G. Bat Erdene, NCV, Head	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Erdenetsagaan *soum*, Buffer Zone Council
S. Tserennamjil, Member	
L. Saikhantuya, Member	
D. Munguntsetseg, Head	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Erdenetsagaan *soum*, Gazelle Protection Team, Buffer Zone Council
Sh. Narangerel, Member	
D. Munkhuu, Member	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Erdenetsagaan *soum*, Berry Bush Community
Ts. Enkhtsetseg, Head	Sukhbaatar *aimag*, Erdenetsagaan *soum*, "Zegstei" Herders Community

Annex 4. List of documents reviewed

Dalai Van – Audit Co. Ltd, Certified Accounting and Auditing. 1999. Auditor's Report: "Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grassland of Eastern Mongolia" project.

GEF. 2005. Guidelines for Implementing Agencies to Conduct Terminal Evaluations.

GEF. Tracking Tool For GEF Biodiversity Focal Area Strategic Priority One: "Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Areas"

Metzner, K. A. 2004. Final Consultancy Report, Advisor on Community Development for Biodiversity Conservation for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grassland of Eastern Mongolia MON/97/G32.

Ministry of Nature and Environment. 1996. Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan for Mongolia.

Ministry of Nature and Environment, and UNDP/GEF. 2002. Nomrog Strictly Protected Area Management Plan 2001 – 2005.

State Financial Auditing Department. 2000. Auditor's Report: "Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grassland of Eastern Mongolia" project.

TPR Recommendations. 2004. Status of Recommendations from 24 April 2003 ESBP Tripartite Review

UNDP Annual Project Report and UNDP/GEF Project Implementation Report. 2004: Biodiversity Conservation for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grassland of Eastern Mongolia MON/97/G32.

UNDP Annual Project Report and UNDP/GEF Project Implementation Report. 2002: Biodiversity Conservation for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grassland of Eastern Mongolia MON/97/G32.

UNDP. 2001. Report of the Independent Mid-Term Evaluation Mission for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grassland of Eastern Mongolia MON/97/G32.

UNDP. 2005. Measuring and Demonstrating Impact UNDP/GEF Resource Kit (No. 2)

UNDP. 2000. Issues Paper. Provided for the Tri-partite Review of the Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grasslands of Eastern Mongolia Project.

UNDP. 2005. A National Workshop "Presentation of Eastern Steppe Biodiversity Project Activities Implemented in Three Eastern *Aimags*"

UNDP/GEF and Government of Mongolia, 1998. Project Document: Biodiversity Conservation for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grassland of Eastern Mongolia MON/97/G32.

Annex 5. Guiding document for interviews based on project outcomes

Outcomes	Intended beneficiaries	Relevant X-cutting issues	Indicators	Source of information	Method for data collection	Data location
Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Options in the Grasslands of Eastern Mongolia						
1. Protected areas in the Eastern steppe are strengthened to be able to effectively protect critical biodiversity (equivalent to effective enforcement of legal and regulatory measures related to PAs management)	Global and national interest Local people	- Advocate and foster an enabling policy environment - Develop national capacities	- No mining nor other development project activity that may have potential negative impacts on environment is taking place in the existing Protected Areas and their buffer zones	- PA Administration - EPA - Specialized State Agency - *aimag* and *soum* Governors - Local herders - Project staff	interviews	- PA Administration - *aimag* and *soum* Governments
	Global and national interest	- Advocate and foster an enabling policy environment - Develop national capacities	- Illegal commercial hunting of mammals is reduced in the existing Protected Areas and their buffer zones	- PA Administration - Specialized State Agency - Local herders - Official records	- Interviews - Documents	- Eastern Mongolia PA Administration - *soum* and Bag Governments - Buffer zones
	- Global and national interest - Herder communities living in the PA buffer zone	- Advocate and foster an enabling policy environment - Develop national capacities	- Wildfires are reduced in the existing Protected Areas and their buffer zones	- PA Administration - Local herders	- Interviews	- PA Administration - *soum* and Bag Governments
	- PA Administration - Global and national interest	- Develop national capacities - Advocate and foster an enabling policy environment	- Appropriate information on biodiversity from research results are integrated in the PA management plans	- Eastern Mongolia PA Administration	- Interviews - Documents	- PA Administration -Project Central Unit

Outcomes	Intended beneficiaries	Relevant X-cutting issues	Indicators	Source of information	Method for data collection	Data location
2. Sustainable alternative livelihoods and biodiversity conservation in the PA buffer zones are supported	Local populations Global and national interest	Forge partnership for results	- Illegal commercial hunting of mammals is reduced in the existing Protected Areas and their buffer zones	- PA Administration Specialized State Agency - Local herders - Official records	- Interviews - Documents	- PA Administration - *soum* and Bag Governments
	Local populations Global and national interest	- Develop national capacities - Forge partnership for results	- Illegal collection of rare and endangered medicinal plants for commercial purposes is reduced	- EM PAA (what species and locations) - *soum* Authorities	Interview documents	EMPAA
	- BZ Management committees	- Develop national capacities - Forge partnership for results	- Buffer zone management plans integrating biodiversity conservation, fire management and afforestation are prepared by buffer zone management committees following a participatory approach	- BZC (4-5) - EMPAA - NCVs - Project staff - Management plans *soum* authorities	Interview documents	*soum* Governments EMPAA in Choibalsan Project Office in Choibalsan
	- Local herders -	Develop national capacities (institutional)	- Research activities have provided relevant information on biodiversity that could be integrated in the protected areas and buffer zone management plans	- BZC - EMPAA - Project staff - NCVs	Interview documents	BZC EMPAA Project office *soum* Governments
	- Buffer zone population	Enhance national ownership	- Raised public awareness on biodiversity conservation in buffer zones	- Local people in BZ -*soum* and Bag Governors - NCVs	Interviews Site visits	*soum* and Bag Governments Project Sites

Outcomes	Intended beneficiaries	Relevant X-cutting issues	Indicators	Source of information	Method for data collection	Data location
	Local populations	- Develop national capacities - Forge partnership for results	- Alternative livelihood options are included in the buffer zone management plans	- BZC (4-5) EMPAA NCVs Project staff Management plans *soum* authorities	- Interview - Documents - Site visits	*soum* Governments EMPAA in Choibalsan Project Office in Choibalsan Community groups in buffer zones
3. Components of biodiversity are incorporated into *aimag* and *soum* development plans	*aimag* and *soum* authorities and populations	- Develop national capacities - Enhance national ownership - Forge partnership for results	- *aimag* and *soum* government professional staff capacities and awareness for incorporating biodiversity issues in land use and development planning are increased	*aimag* and *soum* authorities *aimag* Land Agencies	Interviews documents	*aimag* and *soum* Governments
	aimag and *soum* populations	- Enhance national ownership - Forge partnership for results	- Local people awareness on biodiversity issues is increased (TV – radio – School programs)	Local people in rural and urban areas	Interviews	*aimags* and *soums*
	Global and national interests	Develop national capacities (institutional)	- Appropriate information on biodiversity from research results are integrated in the *aimag* and *soum* development plans	*aimag* and *soum* Authorities *aimag* and *soum* Development Plans	Interviews documents	*aimag* and *soum* Governments

Outcomes	Intended beneficiaries	Relevant X-cutting issues	Indicators	Source of information	Method for data collection	Data location
	Global and National Interest	Advocate and foster an enabling policy environment	- No mining nor other development project activities that may have potential negative impacts on environment is taking place in the three *aimags* of the Eastern Region	*aimag* and *soum* Authorities *aimag* Land Agencies SSAs EPAs	Interviews Documents (Official records)	*aimag* and *soum* Governments EPAs
	MNE	- Enabling environment; - Develop national capacities; - Enhance national ownership	- Trust fund established, capitalized and operational	MNE UNDP Trust Fund Management Rules	Interviews documents	MNE UNDP Trust Fund Management Committee
	Grantees	- Promote gender equality - Develop national capacities	- At least two grantees obtained their Master's degrees and four grantees completed a one-year training programme and reinstated in a relevant position	Project team Project M&E documents	Interviews documents	Project Office
	Global and regional interests	- Forge partnership for results	- The international meeting with China and Russia allowed the identification of practical solutions to the transboundary illegal hunting	EMPAA *aimag* governments EPA	Interviews documents	EMPAA *aimag* governments EPA
	Government of Mongolia	Advocate and foster an enabling policy environment	- Environmental laws have been updated based on project's results to support biodiversity conservation in the Eastern Steppe.	MNE EMPAA Project staff	Interviews documents	MNE EMPAA

Annex 6. List of research projects

Management of protected areas of the Eastern Steppes

Research project title	Duration and cost in US $	Comments on purpose and use of findings
Biodiversity and conservation of Buir Nuur (Lake): inventory of the diatom flora	11 months (1999-2000) $ 5 449	Buir lake is one of the main water bodies in the region and a major source of water to the Numrug SPA Diatoms are an indicator of the lake condition
Herpetology and ichthyology in Buir, Khukh, Doroo lakes and Kherlen, Onon, Khalkh and Ulz rivers in Eastern Mongolia	2 years (1999-2001) $ 3 390	Contribution to updating inventories of Eastern Mongolia's biodiversity.
Physical effects of mineral extraction in PA buffer zones of Eastern Mongolia	15 months (1999-2001) $ 5 327	Data provided reference data on the concentrations of heavy metals, on the quality of water and soil, on dust and noise around exploitation sites for gold, oil and uranium exploitation.
Conservation and management of endangered species of cranes in Eastern Mongolia	15 months (1999-2000) $ 4 896	5 of the 10 world crane species are occurring in Mongolia and are all threatened. The study was on the distribution of the crane species relatively to the delimitation of the PAs. Data were integrated in the management plans of Mongol Daguur SPA and Ugtam NR
Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) population ecology study and census in Lhachinvandad NR	5 months (2002) $ 3 600	1st census of that population – this study was requested by *aimag* authorities, MNE and the Parliament who were concerned about potential inbreeding
Forest inventory and assessment in Numrug SPA and Ugtam NR	3 months (2002) $ 2 800	This study, including an inventory of the threats to forests, was requested by *aimag* authorities and the MNE – Data were integrated in the environmental database

Action-oriented research on specific issues related to the management of the BZs

Research project title	Duration and cost	Comments on purpose and use of findings
Population dynamics of the Brandt's vole (*Microtus brandtii* Radde) and its role in the steppe ecosystem	3 years (1999-2002) $ 10 869	The study findings shed new light on the relationship between this species outbreaks and the pasture condition, and enabled the development of an ecological approach to control this rodent based on pasture condition and taking measures to maintain an ecological balance with its natural predators (prey bird and foxes) – which was successfully implemented by herder communities
Marmot census in Dornod, Sukhbaatar and Khentii *aimags*	4 months (2001) $ 5 300	Management recommendations to protect this species and manage hunting were made on the basis of these censuses
Climate change studies in Eastern Mongolia	18 months (1999-2001) $ 2 695	This work, based on the statistical processing of over 60 years of data, allowed to increase fundamental environmental knowledge

Research project title	Duration and cost	Comments on purpose and use of findings
Conservation biology and migration of the Mongolian Gazelle (*Procarpa gutturosa*)	3 years (1999-2002) $ 300 000	By far the most expensive study, this research provided very little relevant information to improve the management of this species and assess the adequacy of the PAs to protect it. The research insufficiently integrated ecological variables with gazelle movement.
Grassland health and trends in the Eastern Steppe	4 years (2001-2004) $ 15 000	This study based on a monitoring of rangelands with the pasture condition index was used as ground truth data for satellite image processing and led to recommendations to improve pasture condition by rotational use of pastures
NOAA/AVHRR satellite imagery as a rangeland monitoring tool	2 years (2000-2002) $ 2 400	Remote sensing technology used to document snow cover and pasture condition, and to monitor fires
Population structure and grazing effect of the Daurian pika (*Ochotona daurica*) in the Eastern Steppe grassland ecosystem	16 months (2000-2001) $ 3 615	This study had little relevance to management needs
Ecological effects of fire on the grassland ecosystem of the Eastern Steppe	26 months (2001-2003) $ 5 955	The study increased the understanding of the ecological role of fire in the grassland ecosystem and showed that fire frequency higher than once every 4 year has a detrimental effect on pasture condition. Conditions that lead to uncontrolled fires (tall grass) must be avoided. Fires must be avoided in PAs to protect biodiversity, and around settlements to protect human lives and cattle.

Research related to the integration of biodiversity components into land use plans for each *aimag* including identification of threats to biodiversity hotspots and measures to remove or mitigate them

Research project title	Duration and cost	Comments on purpose and use of findings
Study on hunting activities in the Eastern *aimags* of Mongolia	17 months (2000-2002) $ 45 000	This study conducted to assess whether hunting activities were threatening wildlife populations included a market study based on a 1-year monitoring, a socioeconomic study and inspectors and rangers reports on the occurrence of hunting activities. The findings revealed a high rate of hunting without legal permits and the prominent impact of middle class hunters whose hunting efficiency is higher due to the availability of means of transport and guns.
The impact of pasture use on biodiversity of Eastern Mongolia	6 months (2002) $ 25 720	Maps reporting land use patterns and biological resources were used to plan CCF activities

Annex 7. METF governance bodies and presentation of the successive steps or events

Governance bodies	Composition	Duties	Observations of the Legal audit (Nov. 05)
Management board	- 9 members with representatives from government agencies, NGOs, academic community, private sector and international donor community - 2 members were nominated by UNDP Mongolia, 2 members by the MNE and 5 members elected at the National Workshop - Members were appointed for a period of three years	- Responsible for the administration and operation of the METF: - The board establishes criteria for evaluating and prioritizing projects in accordance with the objectives of the foundation and selects projects on the basis of these criteria	*- Was established in August 1997 during the pre-project pilot phase supported by the GEF* *- approved the articles of association which were used to register the METF in November 1997* *- Afterwards, has not organized the minimum required number of meetings nor made strategic decisions; has not engaged in fulfilling the legal obligations stipulated in the agreement with major donors such as approving the operational manual or appointing an asset manager*
Fund administra-tion office (Trust Fund Office)	Initial staff: one full-time Trust Manager (running costs supported from ESBP for a limited period until the METF would produce revenues – although not in the ESBP budget), one supervisor and one administrative assistant working part-time	Manages the day-to-day running of the METF, acts as a liaison between the Board, the STAC and the FAC	*- Has not been fully operational and was closed at the end of 1999 due to lack of financial resources (end of ESBP financial support)* *- Has never submitted the yearly reports to the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs as requested under the Law on NGOs in Mongolia and regulation No 154*
Financial advisory committee		Advises the Board on all matters relating to finance in Mongolia and abroad	*Was never formed*
Asset Manager		Manages the METF capital invested offshore	*Was never appointed*
Scientific and technical advisory committee		Reviews all proposals for funding and advises the Board on proposed and existing projects funded by the METF	*Was never formed*

DATES	STEPS/EVENTS
August 1997	Board established during the pre-project pilot phase supported by the GEF
November 1997	METF legally established and officially registered under the Dutch law with the Chamber of Commerce in the Netherlands (as the banking sector was not stabilized yet in Mongolia)
January 1998	Registration of the representative office of the METF with the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs of Mongolia (certificate valid for a 3-year period – extension of the certificate must be made prior to the expiration date)
June 1998	Launching of the MON/97/G32 project Trust Fund Office established in Ulaanbaatar (Trust manager, supervisor and administrative assistant)
1998	By-laws drafted
1998	Opening of an international offshore account with the ABN AMRO Bank in Netherlands
1998	Last Annual General Meeting of the Board
2000	UNDP contributes US$ 50,000. to the offshore account GEF contributes US$ 100,000. as matching fund Government of Mongolia contributes US$ 50,000.
January 2001	Expiration of the certificate of the Representative office
2001	UNDP contributes US$ 335,570. Government of Norway contributes US$ 338,077. GEF contributes US$ 300,000. (matching fund should have been US$ 680,000. – balance pending because of unmet conditions)
December 2001	Signature of the Memorandum of Agreement the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and the UNDP regarding the Mongolian Environmental Trust Fund
November 2003	Planning of a meeting to elect new board officers – was never held GEF completed its second instalment with US$ 400,000 Government of Mongolia has not made its contribution yet
November 2004	A meeting between the Minister of Nature and Environment and the UNDP Resident Representative / UN Resident Coordinator allowed to reach an agreement to activate the METF through establishing a working group to serve as the Secretariat to the METF Board of Directors and support in implementing the Board Meeting provisions
May 2005	Meeting at UNDP attempting to establish a task force Composition of the Board reviewed
June 2005	Expiration of the GEF funding commitment according to the GEF/Trust Fund Grant Agreement - According to this agreement, no withdrawal of funds from the income of the Foundation will be made and the Income of the Foundation shall not be used after June 30 2005 or any other date notified by UNDP to the Foundation. Explicit permission is required from UNDP HQ after this date.
July 2005	METF Management Board meeting
October 2005	Balance of US$ 1,213,502.25 including accrued interest of US$ 39,854.56 in the ABN AMRO account as of 31.10.2005
November 2005	Legal audit is conducted
December 2005	End of MON/97/G32 project