



TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

of the

UNDP-GEF Project

“Establishment of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve Project as a Model for Biodiversity Conservation in Uzbekistan”

(UNDP PIMS #1271)



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFA	Administrative Finance Assistant
BD	Biodiversity
BR	Biosphere Reserve
BRMB	Biosphere Reserve Management Board
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
CO	Country Office
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DEX	Direct Execution
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
Gosbiocontrol	State Inspection of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Guards and Rational Use of the Animal and Vegetative World and Reserves
GOU	Government Of Uzbekistan
IA	Implementing Agency
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
MAB	Man and the Biosphere Programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MOA	Memorandum Of Agreement
MP	Management Plan
MSP	Medium Size Project
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment
NEX	National Execution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NKBR	Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve
OP	Operational Programme
PA	Protected Area
PDF	Project Development Facility
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PNA	Protected Natural Area
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RAF	Resource Allocation Framework
RBM	Results Based Management
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SCNP	State Committee on Nature Protection
SHD	Sustainable Human Development
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Tri-Partite Review
TRAC	Target of Resource Allocation from Core
UN	United Nations
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USD	United States Dollar
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Area
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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The Republic of Uzbekistan is situated in the central part of the Eurasian continent between 37°45' latitude North and 56°73' latitude east, within the subtropical zone of the northern hemisphere. The territory covers approximately 447,400 km², and is bordered by Kazakhstan to the north, Turkmenistan to the West, Afghanistan to the south, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to the east. The Republic is divided into 14 main administrative units (12 Oblasts, Tashkent City and the semi-autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan in the north-western part of the country). The Human Development Index (HDI) for Uzbekistan is 0.696, which gives Uzbekistan a rank of 113th out of 177 countries (2006 report).

Almost 85% of its territory is occupied by desert or semi-desert, including the largest desert in Central Asia, the Kyzylkum. These deserts are flanked by the extensive Tien Shan and Pamir-Alai mountain systems in the east and south-east which occupy 15% of the territory. The main water arteries are the transboundary rivers, the Amu-Darya and the Syr-darya, which deliver their waters into the Aral Sea, a large part of which is within the territory of the republic. These rivers are flanked by broad, flat valleys which are intensely utilised for irrigated agriculture.

The biodiversity of Uzbekistan is made up of about 11,000 vegetal species (more than 4,800 vascular plant species exist and belong to 650 genera and 115 families) with a rate of endemism of 8% and about 15,000 animal species; including 664 vertebrate species. The endemism rate for vertebrates is 52% for fish; 51.7 % for reptiles; 1.8 % for birds and 15.4% for mammals. Many flora and fauna species of Uzbekistan are threatened. The current Red Book of Uzbekistan includes 184 animal species (24-mammals, 48-birds, 16-reptiles, 18 fish, 54 insects, 6 Crustacean, 1 arachnid, 14 molluscs, 1 leech and 2 worms).

The project site, which includes the Nuratau Mountain range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert, is an area of key national and global biodiversity value incorporating medium-sized mountains (maximum elevation of 2,169 metres), foothills, desert and wetland ecosystems uninterrupted in the past by any intensively used land. The project site is therefore representative of a large number of basic ecotypes in Central Asia. Its unique biogeographical character, in combination with the presence of numerous globally endangered species, makes the area one of undoubted global biodiversity value.



The project area is unique in Central Asia in that it contains three different landscapes including, mountains, semi-desert plains, and wetlands/lakes. Within these broad ecological units, a large diversity of natural ecosystems/habitats exist, including all the major types of desert ecosystems in the Kyzylkum and several mountain types within the Nuratau mountain range. In addition, there is an extensive semi-natural lake, Lake Aydar, which was significantly enlarged in 1969 by water management authorities and which constitutes a globally valuable wetlands resource.

The unique interest of the area is further enriched by the existence of special cultural landscapes created through centuries of human cultivation that are worthy of protection in their own right. Human involvement has ranged from orchard and forest garden development with an ancient and elaborate irrigation systems in some valleys, to low intensity livestock herding. The orchards and forest gardens are of particular interest as they have a high potential as a source of genetic material and are an example of human activity actually adding rather than degrading biodiversity value, as they provide / preserve otherwise unavailable or rare ecological conditions and niches.

Central Asia is the place of origin of some of the largest plant families and genera of the Eurasian continent, including numerous species of cultivated plants. Due to the diverse landscape of the Nuratau area and its biogeographical location on the border between the Pamiro-Alai System and the Kyzylkum Desert, the flora is especially interesting. The mountain part of the project area contains approximately 1,200 plant species (62 endemic), including species of potential commercial interest (medicinal herbs, ornamental plants, and food plants). The desert contains about 300 plant species.

The fauna of the project area is also of significant global biodiversity value - it is composed of species from both the Central Asian mountains and the continental deserts, and includes over 250 birds (approx. 150 species breeding), 29 reptile species, and 35 mammal species. There are several rare and highly endangered species of reptiles including the desert monitor (*Varanus griseus*), the Central-Asian cobra (*Naja oxiana*) (included in the IUCN Red List) and the levantine viper (*Vipera lebetina*). Of particular importance are populations of globally endangered bird species, especially birds of prey such as the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), cinereous black vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), lammergeier (*Gypaetus barbatus*), and golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), which are all commonly sighted. Other species of international importance are the houbara bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata*), dalmatian and great white pelican (*Pelecanus crispus* and *P. onocrotalus*) and Black stork (*Ciconia nigra*). The proposed core area of the biosphere reserve also includes 95% of the world's remaining population of the Kyzylkum (*Severtzov's*) Argali (*Ovis orientalis severtzovi*), which is a globally endangered subspecies (IUCN Red List EN A2cde, C2b). Initial research has revealed a number of invertebrate species some of which are rare or endangered. At the present time about 1,873 (144 families, 22 orders) species of insects have been identified in the project area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UNDP-GEF project “*Establishment of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve (NKBR) Project as a Model for Biodiversity Conservation in Uzbekistan*” had a budget of USD 725,000 funded by GEF and USD 242,100 funded by UNDP TRAC and 99.3% will be spent by the end of the project. The project started in March 2001 for 4.5 years but was extended to August 2007. The Executing Agency for the project was the State Biological Control Service (Gosbiocontrol) - a body under the State Committee for Nature Protection (SCNP).

The objective of the project is to conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan and the region. It had 5 outcomes: (1) The unique national and global biodiversity value and the mosaic of natural and cultural landscapes in the project area conserved; (2) Local authorities and communities have a better awareness and valuation of biodiversity resources and services and an understanding of the principles of sustainable development; (3) The capacity of local authorities and communities to play an active role in the planning and management of natural resources and development of sustainable livelihoods in place; (4) Types of land use reduced within the project area with negative effects on the ecosystems and the basis established for the long term sustainable development of the area in place; (5) New “inclusive” and sustainable human development-oriented approaches to the conservation of biodiversity in Uzbekistan developed and tested;

This terminal evaluation was initiated by the UNDP Country Office of Uzbekistan as the GEF Implementing Agency. It is to provide a professional assessment of the project implementation successfulness against the set objective and indicators – including the global environmental benefits - and the lessons learned which can be considered for the development of other GEF projects in Uzbekistan and in the region. This evaluation was performed by a team of Consultants (Jean-Joseph Bellamy and Natalya Marmazinskaya) on behalf of the UNDP.

This evaluation is based on a desk review of project documents and on interviews with key project informants and project staffs. The methodology included the development of an evaluation matrix to guide the entire data gathering and analysis process. The findings were triangulated with the use of multiple sources of information when possible. The evaluation report is structured around the GEF five major evaluation criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Results/Impacts and Sustainability:

The main findings of this evaluation are:

Overall, the project design, implementation and achievements are satisfactory. It was the first UNDP-GEF project implemented outside of Tashkent in Uzbekistan and the project operated in a complex environment. The design was technically good but the timing and the sequence were ambitious; however, no real other options were available at the time. Starting the project after the creation of the NKBR was not really an option since the Government of Uzbekistan (GOU) needed some support to prepare the necessary documents to establish legally the NKBR. Moreover, despite this uncertainty around the creation of the biosphere reserve (still pending), the project contributed to the development of the capacity of many people and organizations involved in the management of protected areas. The project pioneered the consultation of Stakeholders, the preparation of all necessary steps to create a biosphere reserve (BR) such as zoning plan, draft decree for the creation of a BR, management plan for the Administration to manage the newly created reserve and demonstrated best practices to achieve sustainable natural resource use to improve local livelihood; including management models to reduce the threats to local biodiversity. The BR concept, the lessons learned / best practices have already been used in the design and implementation of several projects in Uzbekistan and in the region. Nevertheless, the official creation of the NKBR would be a clear signal from the GOU for the future of the protected area system in Uzbekistan, whereby the BR concept would be now fully accepted and has an enabling environment to be implemented in Uzbekistan.

The project was highly relevant in meeting the objectives of the UNCBD, the UNDP and GEF, in responding to the development objectives of Uzbekistan and in meeting the needs of the target beneficiaries; its relevance is rated as highly satisfactory. Its design was satisfactory and the project document contains a convincing approach to address the existing problems. There was no other real design option at the time; though, based on what we now know, the timing and sequence of the design was too ambitious.

The project was effective in achieving its expected outcomes; its effectiveness is rated as satisfactory. Despite the fact that the responsibility of creating the NKBR resides outside the project authority, the project was able to utilize its resources to achieve good results and contribute toward the objective of the project which was to conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan and in the region.

However, the project assumed that *“those relevant government agencies and the Cabinet of Ministers / Parliament show adequate commitment to the timely approval and enactment of required legislation”*. This assumption was not part of the most important project risks and it seems like the assumption of creating the NKBR was a “fait accompli”. It is only in 2005 that an additional risk was identified and categorized as political *“the Government will not legally establish the Biosphere Reserve by the end of the project, which will not allow the project to logically complete all planned activities and reach envisaged objectives”*.

The project was well managed and the resources utilized efficiently; its efficiency is rated as satisfactory. The project management team used the log frame and adaptive management extensively to secure project outcomes while maintaining adherence to the overall project design. Despite some Staff turnover during the first few years of the project, the technical assistance team was well qualified to implement the project; was highly motivated toward goal achievement and used/developed the capacity of the national staff. The project delivery mechanisms were good with a PSC to oversee the progress of the project and a Tri-Partite Review (TPR) process to review the progress and implementation issues and make the necessary decisions. The implementation approach emphasized a strong participation of Stakeholders and most of the project achievements are owned by the relevant Stakeholders.

However, the sub-contracting mechanism for the implementation of the sub-projects did not work-out as planned and the project management team had to deal with some time-consuming contractual issues. The country ownership has been hampered by the delay in establishing the BR. It forced the project to focus on putting pressure on the relevant Ministries and Agencies for the resolution of the issue instead of transferring responsibilities and further developing the capacity of the key agencies.

The potential impact to achieve its long term goal and objective is mixed; despite an effective (satisfactory) implementation of the project its impact is rated as marginally satisfactory. The potential impact does exist; however, the risk that the NKBR will not be created also exists and prevents the Evaluators to ascertain that there is a good potential impact in the long term to achieve the project goal and objective. If the NKBR will not be created, most of these deliverables may be lost over time. The impact of the project will reside mostly with the Stakeholders who were engaged in the project during its implementation and who acquired skills and knowledge in the area of biodiversity conservation and protected area management. However, if the NKBR is created, the potential impact of the project to achieve its long term objective is good. The legal establishment of the BR would re-energized the Stakeholders to make it a reality and the pending NKBR management plan, best practices, and management models would be “awakened” and would be put into practice throughout the NKBR and potentially in other protected areas in the country. Nevertheless, the GEF contribution to global environmental benefits does exist on this project; it contributed to a dialogue on the Uzbek protected area system which needs to be reorganized and expanded (first priority of the 1998 NBSAP).

The sustainability of the project achievements is questionable; its sustainability is rated as marginally satisfactory. The establishment or the non-establishment of the NKBR is translated into two long term sustainability scenario: If the biosphere reserve is not created – it means a very limited sustainability of the critical project achievements; and if the biosphere reserve is created – it means a good sustainability of the critical project achievements. However, the sub-project achievements at the local level are sustainable. The capacity of the recipients was developed and the achievements should be sustained dynamically in the long run. People will use the skills and knowledge acquired with the project support and will continue with their day-to-day activities using the achievements as a basis to expand their production sustainably such as new plantations or better livestock management. Additionally, despite a questionable sustainability, the replicability and scaling-up of the project is good. The project concept, lessons learned and best practices were already used in the design and implementation of several projects in Uzbekistan and in the region.

Despite that it is difficult to read the “crystal ball”, the possibility for a legal establishment in the next few weeks still exists; however, this matter may also take a longer time to be finalized for reason we do not know. Considering also that there seem to be no obvious opposition to the legal establishment of the NKBR and that the process of creating the reserve is well advanced in the local communities in the area, the option of “No NKBR” does not seem to be possible at this point or at least a political decision which may not go without impacts.

Few lessons were identified:

- The design of projects involving the achievement of critical milestones such as a new Law or a new institution should better take into account the time needed for the political process to go through. This political process should also be fully part of the logic of the project intervention and allow the project to stop/pause until this achievement is met.
- A project involving a change of the legislation and/or policy framework should not be shorter than 5 years. The time it takes to change a Law or a Policy is often underestimated and the overall project duration too short to develop the full necessary capacity to make the change sustainable.
- Considering the difficulties/barriers to work in an environment such as Central Asia, it is not efficient to sub-contract an external partner for small sub-projects; particularly for sub-projects with small budgets.
- In a complex socio-economic-political context such as Uzbekistan, the design of projects should emphasize assessments (using instrument such as PDFs) focusing on policies, legislation and institutions - including capacity assessments - and a thorough assumptions and risks assessment.
- When using a Project Management Unit (PMU) to implement projects, the long term sustainability of project achievements is always riskier than when the project is implemented within a stronger partnership with one local institutions; sharing resources. Moreover, the earlier the project achievements are institutionalized the better the long term sustainability will be.
- Within the context of a project focusing on legislation and institution development, the implementation of sub-projects demonstrating and testing new approaches is vital for these projects. It provides good examples of sustainable use of the natural resources to improve the local livelihood; and also conserving the local biodiversity at the same time.
- There is little emphasis on policy development and policy implementation in Uzbekistan. Legislative frameworks are the guiding principles for ministries and agencies’ programming. This approach is time-consuming and resource intensive and prevents a more rapid response for agencies to adapt locally.
- The management of a biosphere reserve area which includes many rural communities and few small towns is a complex area to manage that is much more difficult to manage than a more traditional protected area. The management approach needs to be much more participatory and be inclusive of all the population leaving in the area; particularly the land users.
- Accurate and relevant information and communication are important components of the management framework of a BR. Good and accessible information is key for good decision-making but also to keep people abreast of new developments, to offer information on best practices, etc.

Finally, a set of recommendations was identified; based on the findings of this evaluation:

Recommendations to End the Project

1. As part of building the political case for the establishment of the NKBR, the project should introduce the NKBR package to the committee on the environment existing under the Senate.
2. Organize a meeting with the Prime Minister, the Chairman of SCNP, a Representative from the Cabinet of Ministers, UNDP and the Project Management Team to review the process of establishing the NKBR. This recommended meeting should be prepared in the context of the closure of the project, press on for the political process to be finalized and to obtain the latest status on the establishment of the NKBR which will be the final statement from a government perspective to be in the final project report.
3. Continue to support the Gosbiocontrol and SCNP to help any possible actions they would like to undertake to press on the political process of establishing the NKBR.
4. The existing body of knowledge of the project should be loaded onto the web and anybody should be able to

access it. The numerous models, manuals, plans, assessments and other pieces of project information should be posted to a web site and be available to whoever wants to access it. The project should catalogue this information and should also provide a copy of most of this knowledge to the main relevant organisations such as SCNP and the Forestry Department and their respective Agencies.

5. The project should conduct a full review of the agreements reviewed with project support and document them all in the end of project report to leave a transparent paper trail after the project end.
6. Once created, the GOU will need support to establish this new NKBR and to develop the capacity of the new Administration to manage this new area. Donors should support the GOU to produce a sustainable development profile of the area, to review the best practices used in similar BR worldwide, to conduct a comprehensive capacity assessment and to establish a long term strategic development plan for the NKBR.
7. The livestock and rangeland management plan supported by the project needs to be published and “owned” by a local organisation. The project should discuss this matter with the main stakeholder (the Institute of Karakul Sheep Breeding and Ecology of Desert) and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Recommendations for Designing other Projects

8. Any approval of new GEF funded biodiversity project should be tied with the conclusion of this project. In the situation where the NKBR will not be created before the end of the project, it is important to obtain the “official version” of the government to bring the NKBR proposal to a closure.
9. Projects with a similar critical milestone which is not dependent on the project but on one partner should be designed carefully and be flexible enough to be implemented in two phases: one before the critical milestone is reached and one after the critical milestone is approved, created or met. This type of project needs to have a stopping/pausing point before going into the next phase of implementation.
10. Conduct comprehensive assessments for the design of new projects, emphasize community/stakeholders participation and develop projects for a minimum duration of at least 5 years. Comprehensive assessments should avoid surprises during the implementation of these projects.
11. When designing new projects in the natural resource management area, emphasize a capacity development approach with some key features such as:
 - a. Build on existing programmes, structures & mechanisms;
 - b. Emphasize early engagement of Stakeholders and keep ownership with them;
 - c. Work with champions but still support less engaged Stakeholders;
 - d. Early Institutionalization = LT Sustainability.
12. Streamline UNDP administrative procedures; particularly the line of authority to approve any payment of project expenditures. The efficiency of these payments should be improved and a careful use of cash payments in rural areas by projects should be accommodated.
13. The implementation of sub-projects should be executed by the projects themselves and should have a duration of a minimum of three (3) years. The budgets are too small to attract international NGOs with good project implementation track record.
14. Support a greater involvement of the scientific community in this type of project; particularly with a focus on the impact of management practices on the biodiversity.

Recommendations for the “Tugai” and “Kugitang” Projects

15. The design of the two closely related UNDP-GEF projects – (i) “*Conservation of “Tugai” Forest” and Strengthening Protected Areas System in the Amu Darya Delta of Karakalpakstan*” and (ii) “*Enhancement of national strict nature reserves effectiveness by demonstrating new conservation management approaches in Surkhan Strict Nature Reserve (former Kugitang Mountains project)*” – needs to incorporate the critical lessons learned around the issue of the creation of the NKBR (i.e. the non-creation of the NKBR hampered the success of the project and jeopardize its long term sustainability). It is recommended that in both cases this issue be reviewed as soon as possible by the respective management team, be monitored carefully, clarify these matters with the GOU and obtain a commitment from the GOU to fulfill their obligations on time.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the findings of the terminal evaluation of the UNDP-GEF project “*Establishment of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve Project as a Model for Biodiversity Conservation in Uzbekistan*” (UNDP PIMS #1271). This terminal evaluation was performed by an independent team of Consultants – Jean-Joseph Bellamy and Natalya Marmazinskaya - on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

2. This Project is a continuity of the partnership between UNDP-GEF and the Government of Uzbekistan to protect and maintain the country’s rich biodiversity. In 1998, with the financial support of UNDP-GEF, Uzbekistan developed its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) which was approved by the Government of Uzbekistan (GOU) on April 1, 1998. This action plan is structured around three key issues to be addressed in Uzbekistan: (1) Reorganisation and expansion of the Protected Area (PA) system; (2) Public awareness, education and participation in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use; and, (3) Development of sustainable use mechanisms such as biotechnology, bio-pharmaceutical and agro-biodiversity development. This project was a direct response to this action plan by supporting priority actions identified in the NBSAP such as the reorganisation and expansion of the PA system in Uzbekistan. It tested new approaches and new models for the development of protected areas in other parts of the country/the region. The project was specifically identified in the National Biodiversity Action Plan of Uzbekistan as a priority pilot activity.

3. The project was approved under the GEF Operational Programme (OP) #3 “*Forest Ecosystems*” but it is also in line with the OP #1 “*Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems*” and OP #4 “*Mountain Ecosystems*” which have the objective of conserving and use sustainably the biological resources in these ecosystems. The project objective is to conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan and in the region. The project aims to:

- (i) Promote a new and more sustainable approach to biodiversity conservation within the project area through the integration of conservation and sustainable natural resource development;
- (ii) Promote local level awareness, ownership, capacity and commitment to the process of achieving biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the project area; and
- (iii) Provide a model for new approaches to the conservation of biodiversity in Uzbekistan and in the region.

4. UNDP is the Global Environment Facility (GEF) implementing agency for this Project, the State Biological Control Service (Gosbiocontrol) - a national specialised inspections body under the State Committee for Nature Protection (SCNP) - is the Executing Agency and a project management unit was created. The Gosbiocontrol appointed their Deputy Chief as the National Project Coordinator. As part of project implementation procedures from UNDP, a terminal evaluation is to be conducted at the end of the implementation of the project. Within this context, UNDP has commissioned this Terminal Evaluation; the results of which are presented in this report (see Terms of Reference in Annex 1).

5. This report includes seven sections. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the project; chapter 3 briefly describes the objective, scope, methodology, evaluation users and limitations of the evaluation; chapter 4 presents the findings made by the evaluation team. Conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations are presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively and relevant annexes are found at the back end of the report.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

6. The goal of the project was to develop and test an integrated and participatory approach to in-situ biodiversity conservation in Uzbekistan by integrating conservation and rural development objectives in order to achieve sustainable conservation and sustainable livelihood goals. The project was to establish, under the umbrella of a zoned Biosphere Reserve, a “multiple use” protected area incorporating strictly protected core areas, buffer zones and “transition” areas in which the establishment of sustainable land-use regimes and local economic structures would be pursued.

7. By addressing initial barriers¹ to the implementation of this new approach for Uzbekistan, the project would secure the conservation of biodiversity in the project area in the medium to long term. In addition, through the use of the project area as a model, the project would contribute to the effectiveness of efforts to redevelop the rest of the national protected areas system in Uzbekistan.

8. The project territory comprises the Nuratau Mountain range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert that form an area of key national and global biodiversity value incorporating medium-sized mountains (maximum elevation of 2,169 meters), foothills, desert and wetland ecosystems. The project site is therefore representative of a large number of basic ecotypes in Uzbekistan and the Central Asia as a whole.

Table 1: Project Expected Results

Objective	Outcomes
To conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan and the region.	1. The unique national and global biodiversity value and the mosaic of natural and cultural landscapes in the project area conserved;
	2. Local authorities and communities have a better awareness and valuation of biodiversity resources and services and an understanding of the principles of sustainable development;
	3. The capacity of local authorities and communities to play an active role in the planning and management of natural resources and development of sustainable livelihoods in place;
	4. Types of land use reduced within the project area with negative effects on the ecosystems and the basis established for the long term sustainable development of the area in place;
	5. New "inclusive" and sustainable human development-oriented approaches to the conservation of biodiversity in Uzbekistan developed and tested;

9. The project is implemented jointly by UNDP and the national counterparts. The national executing agency for the project is the Gosbiocontrol under the SCNP.

10. The originally planned duration of the project was 4.5 years, from March 30, 2001 till August 31 2005. However, the project was extended first until December 31, 2006 and then subsequently until August 31, 2007.

11. The initial cash budget of the project was United States Dollars (USD) 895,000 with USD 725,000 contributed from GEF, USD 150,000 from UNDP Uzbekistan and USD 20,000 from NABU, a German conservation NGO. The Government also committed to contribute USD 480,000 in-kind.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATION

12. This terminal project evaluation (a requirement of UNDP-GEF procedures) was initiated by the UNDP Country Office of Uzbekistan as the GEF Implementing Agency. This evaluation provides a professional assessment of the project implementation successfulness against the set objective and indicators, including contribution of the project to achieving global environmental benefits. This terminal evaluation also collates and analyzes lessons learned and best practices obtained during the period of the project implementation that can be further taken into consideration during development and implementation of other GEF projects in Uzbekistan and elsewhere in the world.

⁽¹⁾ The protected area system in Uzbekistan is faced with three categories of problems (see Section A.1.1.2 in the project document):

- its inability to meet basic biodiversity conservation objectives (i.e. due to poor ecosystem coverage, ecologically non-viable sizes, fragmentation);
- the lack of understanding and awareness at all levels in the Republic (decision makers, planners, general public) of the value and importance of biological conservation and rational use for the development of the country;
- the protected areas system's lack of future economic and social sustainability under the new political and socio-economic conditions.

3.1. Objectives

13. The overall purpose of this evaluation is to measure how successful the implementation of the project has been, what impacts it has generated, if the project benefits will be sustainable in the long-term and what the lessons learnt are for future interventions in the country, region and other parts of the globe where UNDP-GEF provides its assistance.

14. Specifically the present terminal evaluation has the following objectives:

- (i) Analyze and evaluate effectiveness of the results and impacts that the project has been able to achieve against the objective, targets and indicators stated in the project document;
- (ii) Assess effectiveness of the work and processes undertaken by the project as well as the performance of all the partners involved in the project implementation;
- (iii) Provide feedback and recommendations for subsequent decision making and necessary steps that need to be taken by the national stakeholders in order to ensure sustainability of the project's outcomes/results;
- (iv) Reflect on effectiveness of the available resource use; and
- (v) Document and provide feedback on lessons learned and best practices generated by the project during its implementation.

3.2. Scope

15. This terminal evaluation focuses on the project achievements and their long term sustainability. As per the Terms of Reference (TORs), it assessed the following aspects:

Relevance of the project to:

- a) *Conservation* of globally and nationally significant biodiversity;
- b) *Development priorities* at the local and national level;
- c) *Direct beneficiaries* - Government, local authorities, public services, utilities, residents;
- d) *UNDP mission* to promote Sustainable Human Development (SHD) by assisting the country to build its capacities in the focal area of environmental protection and management.

Technical Performance: Assess the technical progress that has been made by the project relative to the achievement of its immediate objective, outcomes and outputs.

- a) *Quality of technical inputs* – have the technical inputs (national and international) been both sound and pragmatic in the context of the country development circumstances and field conditions found;
- b) *Effectiveness* - extent to which the objective have been achieved and how likely it is to be achieved;
- c) *Efficiency* – the extent to which the results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible (cost-effectiveness).
- d) *Adaptability* – has the project been adaptable in the face of technical challenges or changing circumstances.

Management Performance: The assessment will focus on project implementation

- a) *General implementation and management* - assess the project in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs and activities, with particular reference to financial and human resources management ;
- b) *Executing agency, Project, and UNDP Country Office (CO)* – assess the relative roles, capacities and effectiveness of the key project management players, with particular regard to UNDP CO obligations derived from the Implementation Agency (IA) Fee.

Overall success of the project with regard to the following criteria:

- a) *Results* – the positive and negative and the foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects produced by the GEF intervention. This includes direct project outputs, outcomes, objective and longer term impact including the global environmental benefits, replication effects, etc.
- b) *Sustainability* - assessment of the prospects for potential replication of the project positive results after termination of UNDP-GEF support; static sustainability which refers to the continuous flow of the same benefits to the same target groups; dynamic sustainability use and/or adaptation of the

- projects' results by original target groups and/or other target groups; the sustainability should be assessed in terms of ecological, social, institutional and financial sustainability;
- c) *Contribution to capacity development* - extent to which the project has empowered target groups and has made possible for the government and local institutions to use the positive experiences; ownership of projects' results;
- d) *Leveraging* – any additional relevant financial or technical support to the project area.

Synergy with other similar projects, funded by the government and/or other donors.

Recommendations, lessons learned and best practices accumulated during the project for achieving sustainability of the project objective, impacts and mechanisms, including future support of project initiated interventions by the Government and other stakeholders. Specific recommendations may also be drawn from the following aspects:

- Any key limitations in the original project proposal / project document;
- Any key lessons (positive and negative) in terms of both the technical and administrative implementation of the project;
- Any key factors in terms of the development environment that impacted the project;
- Any key lessons in terms of the quality of support provided by UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency;
- The major implications of any of the above for current or future GEF projects generally, and specifically those in the country / sub-region in which UNDP is acting as GEF-IA.

3.3. Methodology

16. The following methodology is based on the evaluation team Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) experience; including experience with UNDP and GEF specifically. It complies with international evaluation criteria and professional evaluation norms and standards. The team used a methodology which promotes a shared understanding of environmental management procedures and priorities. These techniques stress the search for, and application of simple and effective solutions aimed at improving environmental management practices, at both local and global levels.

3.3.1. Overall Approach

17. This terminal evaluation was conducted in accordance with the “*UNDP-GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*”. It was undertaken in-line with the GEF principles such as independence, impartiality, transparency, disclosure, ethical, partnership, competencies, capacities, credibility and utility. It considered the two overarching GEF evaluation objectives at the project level: (i) promote accountability for the achievement of GEF objectives; including the global environmental benefits; and (ii) promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners.

18. The evaluation team developed/used tools in accordance with the GEF policy to ensure an effective project evaluation. As mentioned in the TOR, the evaluation was conducted and the findings are structured around the GEF five major evaluation criteria; which are also the five internationally-accepted evaluation criteria set out by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. There are:

- *Relevance* relates to an overall assessment of whether the project kept with its design and in addressing the key priorities to ensure that the obligations under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) are met and in keeping with the donors and partner policies, as well as with local needs and priorities.
- *Effectiveness* is a measure of the extent to which formally agreed end of project results (outcomes) have been achieved, or can be expected to be achieved.
- *Efficiency* is a measure of the productivity of the project intervention process, i.e. to what degree the outcomes achieved derive from efficient use of financial, human and material resources. In principle, it means comparing outcomes and outputs against inputs.

- *Impacts* are the long-term results of the project and include both positive and negative consequences, whether these are foreseen and expected, or not.
- *Sustainability* is an indication of whether the outcomes (end of project results) and the positive impacts (long term results) are likely to continue after the project ends.

19. A particular emphasis was placed on the achievements of the project, its potential impacts in the long run and the long term sustainability of its achievements.

20. In addition to the principles and evaluation criteria described in the TOR, the evaluation team also applied the following methodological principles to conduct the evaluation: (i) Participatory Consultancy: Participatory data gathering activities; (ii) Applied Knowledge: the evaluation team's working knowledge of evaluation theories and approaches and its particular expertise in environmental issues were applied to this mandate; (iii) Results-Based Management (RBM): they customized RBM to the requirements of this mandate; (iv) Validity of information: Limited only by the resources brought to bear, multiple measures and sources were sought out to ensure that the results are accurate, valid and supported by more than one source of information; (v) Integrity: Any issue with respect to conflict of interest, lack of professional conduct or misrepresentation were immediately referred to the client if necessary; and (vi) Respect and anonymity: All participants had the right to provide information in confidence.

21. The terminal evaluation provides evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The findings were triangulated through the concept of "multiple lines of evidence" using different evaluation tools and gathering information from different types of stakeholders and different levels of management. This methodology was presented to UNDP-Uzbekistan for their review and comments at the beginning of the assignment.

3.3.2. Evaluation Instruments

22. To conduct this terminal evaluation, the evaluation team used the following evaluation instruments and data collection instruments to successfully achieve the mandate:

Evaluation Matrix: The evaluation team developed an evaluation matrix based on the evaluation criteria included in the TOR. This matrix served as a general guide for the evaluation (*see Annex 2*). It provided directions for the evaluation; particularly for the collection of relevant data. It was used as a basis for interviewing people and reviewing project documents. It also provided a basis for structuring the evaluation report as a whole. It was presented to UNDP-Uzbekistan for approval before proceeding into the data gathering phase.

Documentation Review was conducted in Uzbekistan and in Canada by the evaluation team. In addition to being a main source of information, the documentation was also used to prepare the mission to Uzbekistan. A list of documents was provided in the TOR and the evaluation team made sure to access all relevant documents. The list of document was reviewed at the start-up of the mission (*see Annex 3*).

Interview Guide: An interview guide was developed - based on the evaluation matrix - to solicit relevant information from the stakeholders who were interviewed. This guide was also used to solicit input from Stakeholders who were not able to be interviewed in person; using phone or email (*see Annex 4*).

Interviews with the Stakeholders listed in the TOR were conducted. This list was reviewed and coordinated with UNDP-Uzbekistan at the start-up of the assignment. These semi-structured interviews were conducted using standards questions developed from the evaluation matrix and adapted to each particular interview. All interviews were conducted in person in Uzbekistan and a few by telephone (*see list in Annex 5*). Confidentiality was guaranteed to the interviewees and the findings were analysed and incorporated in the final report.

Field Visit: As per the TOR, the International Evaluator visited Uzbekistan in June 2007 (*see Agenda in Annex 6*). Additionally, the evaluation team visited the project site (one week) for an in-depth evaluation of some project initiatives and to ensure that the team has direct primary sources of information from the field. These site visits were coordinated by UNDP-Uzbekistan Project Office.

Achievement Rating: Using the GEF project review criteria, the evaluation team rated the following specific project achievements in addition to the overall rating of the project:

- *Project formulation:* conceptualization/design, Stakeholder participation;
- *Project implementation:* implementation approach, monitoring and evaluation, Stakeholder participation;
- *Results:* attainment of outcomes/achievements of objectives.

3.4. Evaluation Users

23. This Terminal Evaluation Report will be disseminated for review to the executing and implementing agencies, national stakeholders and other partners of the project. After finalization, it will be forwarded to UNDP-GEF coordination offices and ultimately to GEF Evaluation office for capitalizing the gained experience and feeding it in formulation of the GEF policies and decision making. The complete list of stakeholders includes:

National:

1. The State Committee for Nature Protection
2. The State Biological Control Service (Gosbiocontrol)
3. The Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Main Forestry Department
4. The Department of the Strict Nature Reserves, National Natural Parks and Game Reserves
5. The Cabinet of Ministers
6. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
7. The Ministry of Finance
8. The Ministry of Economy
9. The Academy of Science
10. GEF Operational Focal Point
11. UNDP Country Office
12. DED office in Tashkent

International:

13. NABU
14. UNDP Country Offices in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan
15. Regional UNDP-GEF office in Bratislava

24. The final evaluation report should also be made available for wide public at www.undp.uz and www.gef.uz.

3.5. Limitations and Constraints

25. The findings and conclusions contained in this report rely primarily on a desk review of project documents, a field mission in the proposed biosphere reserve area and more than 35 interviews with project key informants. Within the given resources allocated to this terminal evaluation, the independent team of consultants conducted a detailed assessment of actual results against expected results.

26. This terminal evaluation report successfully ascertains whether the project met its main objectives, as laid down in the project design document, and whether the project initiatives are, or are likely to be, sustainable after completion of the project. It also makes a number of recommendations that would be useful to reinforce the long term sustainability of the project achievements and also collates and analyzes lessons learned and best practices obtained during the implementation of the project which could be further taken into consideration during the development and implementation of other similar GEF projects in Uzbekistan and elsewhere in the world.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

27. Based on a desk review of project documents and on interviews with key project informants and project staffs, this section presents the findings of this terminal evaluation. As described in Section 3.3.1 they are

structured around the GEF five major evaluation criteria; which are also the five internationally-accepted evaluation criteria set out by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. These are: *Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Results/Impacts* and *Sustainability*:

4.1. Project Relevance

28. The project was designed to develop and test an integrated and participatory approach to in-situ biodiversity conservation in Uzbekistan by integrating conservation and rural development objectives in order to achieve sustainable conservation and sustainable livelihood goals. The project was to establish, under the umbrella of a zoned Biosphere Reserve, a “multiple use” protected area incorporating strictly protected core areas, buffer zones and “transition” areas in which the establishment of sustainable land-use regimes and local economic structures would be pursued. By addressing initial barriers to the implementation of this new approach for Uzbekistan, the project would secure the conservation of biodiversity in the project area in the long term and would contribute to the effectiveness of efforts to redevelop the rest of the national protected areas system. This Section presents the findings on the relevance of the project within the context of its original design and of the protection of biodiversity in Uzbekistan.

4.1.1. UNCBD Objectives

29. Uzbekistan ratified the UNCBD in 1995. The SCNP and the Uzbek Academy of Sciences together with other agencies, developed a NBSAP in 1998 (in 3 languages: Uzbek, Russian and English) with the support of UNDP-GEF. This strategy and action plan was reviewed by the President and a resolution was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers (No. 139 of April 1, 1998). The same year, under the leadership of the SCNP, the government published its first biodiversity national report. The NBSAP was developed within the context of the UNCBD objectives and it is structured around three key issues to be addressed in Uzbekistan:

- Reorganisation and expansion of the PA system;
- Public awareness, education and participation in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use;
- Development of sustainable use mechanisms such as biotechnology, bio-pharmaceutical and agro-biodiversity development.

30. By signing the UNCBD in 1995, Uzbekistan declared its responsibility for the conservation of national biological resources before the international community. A further step in this direction was the signing of the “*Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES) in 1997, the “*Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Animals*” (Bonn Convention on CMS) in 1998 and the adherence to the “*Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat*” (Ramsar Convention) in 2001. Within the scope of the Bonn convention, the GOU signed the international agreements on the conservation of rare and threatened bird species, namely, the “*Memorandum of understanding concerning measures for the Slender-billed Curlew*” (1994), the “*Siberian Crane and the Afro-Asiatic Migratory Waterfowls*” (1996) and the “*International Action Plan on conservation and restoration of the Bukhara Deer*” (2002).

31. Uzbekistan has a Red Data Book which was approved by the GOU in 1983 and that is under the responsibility of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences for its implementation. The composition and the publication of the Red Data Book were regulated in March 1992 by a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers. The Red Data Book presents a documented illustration of the extinction process of animal species, and serves as a basis for action plans for their conservation. It is part of the biodiversity strategy contained in the NBSAP and it forms the basis for the legal protection of biological resources. The last revision of the Red Data Book was in 2006 but the list itself was not reviewed.

32. Currently the GOU is revising its NBSAP. It is recognized that during the first 10 years not much progress was made in the area of biodiversity conservation. However there is a willingness to be more transparent and clearer in the future; a new NBSAP is being prepared and it will be approved by the Cabinet of Ministers once it will be finalized. This basis for developing this new NBSAP includes the new concepts and lessons learned from this project such as the biosphere reserve concept and its three management zones and the approach of community forestry developed under this project.

33. The Biosphere Reserve (BR) concept was/is well adapted for conserving biodiversity in areas where people live; particularly in areas around the strictly PAs established under the Soviet system. It was a full/adequate response to the existing priorities of conserving biodiversity in Uzbekistan and by extension, as indicated in the table below, was/is fully relevant within the context of implementing the UNCBD in Uzbekistan. This project was specifically identified in the NBSAP of Uzbekistan as a priority pilot activity.

Table 2: Relevance of the Project with the UNCBD

UNCBD Articles	Article 6. General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use	Article 7. Identification and Monitoring	Article 8. In-situ Conservation	Article 10. Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity	Article 11. Incentive Measures	Article 12. Research and Training	Article 13. Public Education and Awareness	Article 17. Exchange of Information
Project Outcomes								
1. The unique national and global biodiversity value and the mosaic of natural and cultural landscapes in the project area conserved;	X	X	X	X				
2. Local authorities and communities have a better awareness and valuation of biodiversity resources and services and an understanding of the principles of sustainable development;	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. The capacity of local authorities and communities to play an active role in the planning and management of natural resources and development of sustainable livelihoods in place;		X	X	X	X	X	X	
4. Types of land use reduced within the project area with negative effects on the ecosystems and the basis established for the long term sustainable development of the area in place;		X	X	X	X		X	X
5. New "inclusive" and sustainable human development-oriented approaches to the conservation of biodiversity in Uzbekistan developed and tested;	X		X	X			X	X

34. As indicated in the table above, the project is very relevant for the implementation of the UNCBD in Uzbekistan. By crossing the five project outcomes with the major requirements of the UNCBD, it shows a strong relevance of the project within the context of implementing the UNCBD in Uzbekistan. The project was designed to develop and test an integrated and participatory approach to in-situ biodiversity conservation in Uzbekistan by integrating conservation and rural development objectives in order to achieve sustainable conservation and sustainable livelihood goals. In parallel to the piloting of this approach in the Nuratau-Kyzylkum area - using a "multiple use" approach through the delineation of 3 management zones (core, buffer and transition) - the project also aimed at securing the official creation of this area as a biosphere reserve to secure the conservation of biodiversity in the project area in the long term and to contribute to the strengthening of the national protected areas system in Uzbekistan.

4.1.2. UNESCO-MAB Objectives

35. Uzbekistan has one BR that is part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - Man And Biosphere Programme (MAB) network: the Mount Chatkal; it was registered in 1995 on the basis of a zapovednik established in 1947. This BR received its UNESCO-MAB international certificate in 1995, before the Seville strategy² (1995). However, nationally it remained a strict protected area (zapovednik) and, therefore, this BR does not comply with the current statutory framework of the world network of BR. It covers the south-western end of the Chatkal'skiy Range in the western Tien-Shan Mountains. With an altitude between 1,110 to 4,000 meters above sea level, the Mount Chatkal Biosphere Reserve comprises a high habitat and species diversity. Habitats include mountain steppes, mountain forests, rocks, alpine meadows, river valleys

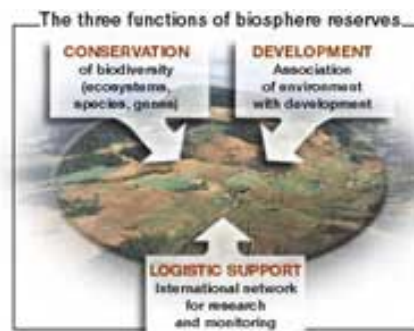
(2) <http://www.unesco.org/mab/BRs/offDoc.shtml>

and floodplain forests. The site is famous from an archaeological point of view since it hosts ancient drawings dating back to 1000-2000 BC. Drawings of riders, houses and dogs indicate that people have inhabited the area since ancient times. Today, the biosphere reserve is not inhabited since human activities in the area ceased in 1947 with the establishment of the State Nature Reserve. Before that, the area was used for hunting, grazing and mineral prospecting. In 1999, some 25,000 people live in settlements close to the area, making their living mainly from agriculture, cattle raising and gardening. The biosphere reserve is devoted to conservation and research and provides a research station, several field stations, museum facilities and a meteorological station.

36. Another site – Gory Gissar site (including the Gissarskiv and Kitabskiy zapovedniks) - was proposed to become part of the same UNESCO-MAB network but the GOU never pursued the application process.

37. As part of the registration of the first UNESCO-MAB in 1995, a MAB committee was created in Uzbekistan. During the initial design of the current project, the German Federation for Nature Conservation (NABU – an international NGO) worked with several Uzbek parties to “preserve or restore nature in the Nuratau Nature Reserve and adjacent district and promote sustainable economic development and ecological development of the region”. The Uzbek parties have committed themselves to submit the application to UNESCO for the certification of the Nuratau-Kyzylykum site as an international biosphere reserve. This UNDP-GEF Project is fully relevant in supporting the concept of a biosphere reserve within the statutory framework of UNESCO’s programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB) that is to support the development of regions, provide assistance to broad scientific interests and ensure nature protection.

38. The concept of biosphere reserves was initiated by a Task Force of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme in 1974. The biosphere reserve network was launched in 1976 and, as of March 1995, had grown to include 324 reserves in 82 countries. The network is a key component in MAB's objective for achieving a sustainable balance between the sometimes conflicting goals of conserving biological diversity, promoting economic development and maintaining associated cultural values. Biosphere reserves are sites where this objective is tested, refined, demonstrated and implemented. In 1984 an action plan for biosphere reserves was formally endorsed by UNESCO and in 1995, UNESCO organized a conference in Seville (Spain) on the biosphere reserves to evaluate the experience of the programme and elaborate a draft statutory framework for the world network of biosphere reserves. Ten key directions were identified at this conference; which provided the foundation for the “*Seville Strategy*”.



39. The UNESCO-MAB statutory framework includes three main functions (Article 3 of the Statutory Framework) which, combined, should promote biosphere reserves as sites of excellence to explore and demonstrate approaches to conservation and sustainable development on a regional scale. The table below indicates the relationship between the three main functions of the UNESCO-MAB statutory framework and the Project:

Table 3: Relevance of the Project with the UNESCO-MAB Framework

UNESCO-MAB Functions	(i) conservation - contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation	(ii) development - foster economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable	(iii) logistic support - support for demonstration projects, environmental education and training, research and monitoring related to local, regional, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development
Project Outcomes			
1. The unique national and global biodiversity value and the mosaic of natural and cultural landscapes in the project area conserved;	X	X	
2. Local authorities and communities have a better awareness and valuation of biodiversity resources and services and an understanding of the principles of sustainable development;	X		X

UNESCO-MAB Functions Project Outcomes	(i) conservation - contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation	(ii) development - foster economic and human development which is socially, culturally and ecologically sustainable	(iii) logistic support - support for demonstration projects, environmental education and training, research and monitoring related to local, regional, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development
3. The capacity of local authorities and communities to play an active role in the planning and management of natural resources and development of sustainable livelihoods in place;	X		X
4. Types of land use reduced within the project area with negative effects on the ecosystems and the basis established for the long term sustainable development of the area in place;	X	X	X
5. New "inclusive" and sustainable human development-oriented approaches to the conservation of biodiversity in Uzbekistan developed and tested;	X	X	X

40. Also part of this statutory framework is a list of criteria set for an area to qualify and be designated as a biosphere reserve. This list includes appropriate zones in the reserve (a legally constituted core area, a landscape protection (buffer) zone and an outer transition area), provisions for a management policy or plan for the area, a designated authority to implement this policy or plan with programmes for research, monitoring, education and training and a mechanism to manage human use and activities in the buffer zone(s). As indicated in the table above and considering the list of criteria, the project objective is fully relevant to support the GOU through the process of certification of the area as a UNESCO-MAB site.

4.1.3. Development Objectives of Uzbekistan

41. The project is fully relevant within the complex development context of Uzbekistan and particularly within the context of environmental governance in place. The project was designed to develop and test an integrated and participatory approach to in-situ biodiversity conservation in Uzbekistan by integrating conservation and rural development objectives in order to achieve sustainable conservation and sustainable livelihood goals. As seen in Section 4.1.1, it is part of the strategies included in the NBSAP. However, Uzbekistan does not really have a national development plan detailing national priorities. It is difficult for international development partners to identify the national priorities and develop projects in response to these priorities. Under the leadership of UNDP and the Ministry of Economy a Welfare Improvement Strategy (equivalent to a Poverty Reduction Strategy) for the period 2008-2012 is being developed with the collaboration of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

42. In the environmental sector, the main – and related - policy is the national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP) which was approved in 1998 by the Cabinet of Ministers. The project is responding very well to the key issues identified in this strategy (see Section 4.1.1).

43. From February 2004 to March 2006, the GOU conducted a National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management (NCSA). This project was implemented by the Centre of Hydro-meteorological Service within the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan and was funded by UNDP-GEF. The main objective of the NCSA was to define national needs and priority areas for capacity building in Uzbekistan in order to explore how the country's obligations under the three Rio Conventions³ could be met in a coordinated and systematic manner. The project conducted an inventory and an analysis of the implementation of the three Rio Conventions in Uzbekistan (3 thematic reports), then it identified the strategic needs and the capacity building priorities to respond to the need for a better implementation of these 3 Rio Conventions; emphasizing synergies (cross-cutting capacity building needs). Finally, the project team and the Stakeholders engaged in this project prepared a National Action Plan for Capacity Development covering the cross-cutting areas for the implementation of the three Rio Conventions. However, since March 2006, no more progress has

⁽³⁾ UN Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Convention to Combat Desertification and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

been made as follow-up actions to this plan.

The National Protected Area System

44. The first protected area in Uzbekistan was created in 1924. During the Soviet time, a system of strictly protected areas was created throughout the country (and in the region). Up to 1988, these PAs (except one) were under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Department. In 1988 the government created the SCNP and all PAs were now governed by this agency. However, in 1989, a decree reversed this decision and “distributed” the strict PAs among few institutions. This institutional set-up remains more or less the same today: 6 strict PAs are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Strict Nature Reserves, National Natural Parks and Game Reserves (under the Forestry Department), 1 strict PA is managed by Gosbiocontrol, 1 strict PA is managed by the Ministry of Geology and 1 strict PA is under the jurisdiction of the Tashkent District for a total of 9 strict PAs. There are also 2 national parks: one is managed by the Forestry Department and one by the Tashkent Province Administration. All together these 9 strictly protected areas (Zapovedniks, International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Cat. I) and the 2 national parks (IUCN Cat. II) cover a total of 8,068 km² or about 1.8% of the country⁴.

The Nuratau-Kyzylkum BR is a unique area. It is the responsibility of the government of Uzbekistan to secure its biodiversity and to pass it to future generations.
Senior Officer at the Institute of Zoology

45. The legal framework to manage the protected areas includes the following main pieces of legislation:
- Law “On Nature Protection”, 1992
 - Law “On Protected Natural Areas”, 2004
 - Law “On Protection and Use of Fauna”, 1997
 - Law “On Protection and Use of Plant World”,
 - Resolution from Oliy Majlis “On Strengthening of Protection of Valuable and Vanishing Plant and Animal Species and Regulation of Their Use”, 1993
 - Resolution of Cabinet of Ministers “On Measures on Strengthening of Protection of Wild Animals and Plants and Regulation of Their Use”, 1993
 - Resolution of Cabinet of Ministers “On Regulation of Import and Export of Birds of Prey in the Republic of Uzbekistan”, 1996
 - Resolution of Cabinet of Ministers “On Hunting and Conducting of Hunting and Fisheries on the Territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, 1991
 - Order of SCNP on “Rules of Hunting and Fisheries on the Territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, 1997
 - Resolution of Cabinet of Ministers on “Statement on order of establishment and conducting of unite system of State Inventories in Republic of Uzbekistan”, 1996 – to assess the biological diversity in Uzbekistan; including a State inventory of wild animals
 - Resolution of Cabinet of Ministers on “Statement on monitoring of State Inventory of wild animals of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, 2000.

46. The current institutional set-up to manage the protected areas in Uzbekistan is far from being adequate. Moreover, the current PA system is not sustainable. Despite being protected, there is still too much exploitation of the natural resources in these areas and too many resources are needed to police them. The model lacks the generation of income which could sustain some of the activities to manage the PAs. Currently the PAs are poorly administered/financed and they do not meet international standards; most of them have some institutional capacity but poor management plans and strategies. The institutional arrangement has been discussed at Parliament level but the recent amendment of the Law on Protected Natural Areas did not address fully this problem. From the interviews, the Evaluators found that the problem is recognized and that there is a need for a reform of this sector. However, no reform is planned in the near future to improve the protected area system in Uzbekistan and few interviewees mentioned also the existence of other competing issues to be addressed in priority such as the water resources which are crucial for the agriculture production.

⁽⁴⁾ The protected areas system in Uzbekistan consists of nine State Reserves (Zapovedniks, IUCN Cat. I), two national parks (IUCN Cat. II), one Biosphere Reserve (IUCN Cat. IX), fourteen Special State Reserves (Zakazniki, IUCN Cat. IV), two State Natural Memorials (IUCN Cat. IV) and one captive breeding centre (IUCN Cat. III). The total protected area is about 25,813 km² (5.75% of the country) but only 1.8 % is strictly protected.

47. Within the context of the existing PA system in Uzbekistan, the project was fully relevant. It tested the concept of 3 management zones (core, buffer and transition) under the umbrella of a BR and this concept is now being accepted by most agencies involved in the protection of these areas. Through the amendment of the Law on Protected Natural Areas (PNA) the BR concept is now embedded into the Law under the clause #44. The success of the sub-project activities (local sustainable socio-economic development) contributed also to pressure the GOU on the need to review the existing national PA system. Most interviewees recognized the need to reform this sector. The question doesn't seem to be "will it happen?" but "When will it happen?"

4.1.4. UNDP and GEF Objectives in Uzbekistan

48. On the basis of the Common Country Assessment (CCA), the UN Country Team in close collaboration with the GOU and civil society representatives prepared the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Uzbekistan for the period 2005-2009. This framework is guided by national priorities, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the international conventions to which Uzbekistan is a Party. It identified four strategic areas of priority for the UN system for the period 2005-2009: improvement of living standards, access to quality basic services (education and health), harmonization of national laws and regulations in accordance with international conventions, and good governance. The formulation of the strategy is done through five outcomes:

1. Strengthened national and local level capacity to develop, implement, and monitor strategies for improving living standards;
2. By 2009, improved quality of basic education is achieved;
3. By 2009, equitable access to quality primary health care services is improved;
4. By 2009, domestic laws are harmonized with UN legal instruments, including human rights, environmental and refugee conventions, and their implementation and monitoring improved;
5. Strengthened Government and civil society capacity and partnership towards more effective governance.

49. Following this framework, UNDP prepared a Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) for the same period 2005-2009 in close collaboration with the GOU, civil society and international development partners. This action plan is contributing directly to meeting the outcomes set forth in the UNDAF, focusing on three interlinked thematic areas: poverty reduction/economic reforms, environmental and energy management and democratic governance.

50. In order to facilitate the implementation of the environment and energy management thematic area, UNDP created an environmental unit in 2005 to strengthen its environmental portfolio. In this area, the action plan aims at attaining the UNDAF outcome #4 which is aimed at harmonizing domestic laws with UN legal instruments, including environmental conventions and to improve their implementation and monitoring. UNDP is to support the GOU in the fulfilment of Uzbekistan's obligations under multilateral environmental agreements. It will focus particularly on assisting the government and local communities with the conservation of biodiversity; including the expansion and improvement of the management of the protected area system.

51. Therefore, the project is directly relevant to UNDP action programme in Uzbekistan by building the capacity of the GOU in the protected area system. The project developed and tested an integrated and participatory approach to in-situ biodiversity conservation in Uzbekistan by integrating conservation and rural development objectives in order to achieve sustainable conservation and sustainable livelihood goals. The project was nominated as the "Best Project in 2006" by the UNDP Uzbekistan.

52. The project is in line with the GEF Strategic Priority #1 (Protected Areas) with the key objective of this priority being to conserve biodiversity through the expansion, consolidation, and rationalization of national PA systems. Its operational focus should be flexible and be based on a thorough understanding of key strengths and weaknesses at the system and national institutional levels, and on how any given individual intervention contributes towards long-term sustainability within a PA systems-context. The project was approved under the OP #3 "Forest Ecosystems" and it is also in line with the OP #1 "Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems" and OP #4 "Mountain Ecosystems" which have the objective of conserving and use sustainably the biological resources in these ecosystems.

53. From a GEF perspective, this project was the first national UNDP-GEF funded project in Uzbekistan being implemented outside of the capital Tashkent. As described in later sections, the lessons learned and best practices were integrated in subsequent UNDP-GEF projects (*see Section 4.5.6*). Under the GEF - Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) for biodiversity, Uzbekistan is part of the “Group” and has a limited allocation of \$1.6M for the period 2006-2009 (GEF 4). This is not a large allocation but it is also important to remember that the RAF for the next GEF replenishment (GEF 5) will be based on the performance of each country in implementing GEF funded projects; therefore, the results of this project will affect the long term performance of Uzbekistan for future GEF budget allocation in the area of biodiversity. The current situation of waiting for the legal establishment of the Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve (NKBR) is not the best scenario for Uzbekistan’s global environmental performance. The prospect of ending the project without the creation of the NKBR would give a poor impression to GEF Secretariat and GEF Evaluation Office; regardless of the other project achievements.

4.1.5. Needs of Target Beneficiaries

54. The project – with its two pronged approach: official creation of the NKBR and community based sub-projects - responded very well to the needs of target beneficiaries as identified in the project document. On one hand with the support to the creation of the NKBR, the project supported the development of capacity of local authorities and local, regional and national agencies such as the nature protection agencies. On the other hand, with the implementation of sub-projects, the project responded to needs explicitly identified by target beneficiaries such as the local communities within the NKBR area, the local businesses and entrepreneurs and the national nature protection agencies: Gosbiocontrol and Forestry Department.

55. The implementation of sub-projects was particularly well received by the local communities living in the area; including the local authorities such as the Governor of the Farish district who is a strong supporter of the BR concept and of the NKBR information centre which is housed in his district. The BR concept was well explained to the local communities and, once understood, was well accepted by the population living in the area. The local communities embraced the implementation of this new BR concept and saw the value of the NKBR for their own livelihood. They realized that this new BR concept would not take away some land from them but would protect the current protected area (zapovednik) as is and would foster local socio-economic development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable.

56. Through public awareness activities conducted by the project in the NKBR area, the project was able to create a “relationship” between the BR concept and the population living in the area. Focusing on the livelihood of local communities, the project supported activities in areas with great needs; such as the forestry, livestock/rangeland management, livelihood and eco-tourism sub-projects. Each of these was implemented on the basis of a strong participation from the target groups. Assessments were conducted during the initial stages to identify the focus of these sub-projects. The project investments made through the sub-projects were mostly the provision of technical assistance emphasizing the development of local capacity – leaving the capital investments to be made by the target groups. This participative approach should ensure the long term sustainability of most of these activities (*see Section 4.5*).

We taught people to respect nature, to use alternative energies, to increase productivity of agriculture systems. Sustainable improvements are made through small steps and using local resources.
Project Staff

57. It was also said that the NKBR area is a good representation of all ecosystems in Uzbekistan (mountain, lake, wetlands and arid areas). Therefore what is accomplished in the NKBR area can be replicated in similar ecosystems throughout Uzbekistan; including the improvement of the livelihood of the local population using the lessons learned and best practices of the sub-project activities supported by the project.

4.1.6. Synergies with Donor Programs/Projects in Uzbekistan and Region

58. In the area of environment, there is not much synergy with other donors in Uzbekistan; mainly due to the fact that no other donors – beside UNDP - are involved in this area, even less in the area of strengthening the protected area system in the country. Most major donors are currently not represented in Uzbekistan. The German cooperation agency (GTZ) and the Swiss cooperation agency are represented but they respectively focus on reforestation of the Aral Sea-bed and on water management.

59. However, among the international development partners, some international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are represented in Uzbekistan and active in the area of protected areas. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has several programmes/projects in the region focusing on the strictly protected area system created under the Soviet regime. WWF started its activities in Uzbekistan (as well as in Central Asia) in 1996. In the region (including Uzbekistan), WWF promotes the protected areas through environmental education but not directly through academic/research and through a political agenda; which makes it difficult to “be heard” by the government.

60. Most of its programmes/projects focus more on the preservation of specific fauna and/or flora such as the preservation of the Bukhara Deer in Uzbekistan⁵, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, which started in 1999 and that is funded by the government of the Netherlands. This project intervenes in 3 strictly PA in Uzbekistan (zapovedniks) but does not include the Nuratau-Kyzylkum zapovednik. WWF Central Asia is also implementing the ECONET Central Asia (in 5 countries) project funded by GEF through UNEP as the implementing agency and the government of the Netherlands. During its initial phase, the ECONET project collaborated with the NKBR project and benefited from its experience, project material, lessons learned and recommendations. This UNEP/GEF-WWF project is promoting a new concept for protected areas - similar to the UNESCO-MAB concept - that is to promote a PA system which combines protected nature areas of different status and territories with different regimes of sustainable resource uses, integrated into the context of local socio-economic development. The ECONET concept (also called “Web for Life”) includes three major elements: core areas, transit areas (ecological corridors) and buffer zones protecting core areas and transit areas from outside interference. The project aims at integrating the ECONET approach into regional and national sustainable development plans; focusing on the implementation of viable mechanisms for long term inter-state coordination and collaboration in the area of biodiversity.

61. DED – the German Development Service - is one of the leading European development services for personnel cooperation. It was founded in 1963 and through development workers, DED aims at improving the living conditions of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America by fighting poverty, promoting a self-determined sustainable development and by preserving natural resources. DED has the legal form of a non-profit-making organisation and is funded by the German government. In the context of the project, DED agreed to assign one DED Rural Development Specialist for a period of 24 months to the project; focusing on the implementation of the sub-project “Community Development and Livelihoods Support on the Territory of the Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve” (see Section 4.2). In the future, DED should provide technical assistance for the UNDP-GEF project: “*Enhancement of national strict nature reserves effectiveness by demonstrating new conservation management approaches in Surkhan Strict Nature Reserve (former Kugitang Mountains project)*”.

4.1.7. Initial Project Conceptualization/Design

Overall Project Design

62. The overall design is rated by the independent final evaluation team as satisfactory. Several project documents were produced as part of the process to design the project and the prodoc approved by GEF contains a full justification and convincing approach to address the problem. The document presents the biodiversity sector and the protected area system in Uzbekistan and the response from the GOU to address the existing problems in these areas. It, then, focuses on the project site and the problem to be addressed before describing the project strategy and the implementation arrangements. Considering also that the design was done in the late 90’s and that it was the first UNDP-GEF project outside of Tashkent, the conceptualization of the project was comprehensive and well articulated. The logic of the project strategy was well laid out in the prodoc; which also included an exit strategy. Finally, the prodoc included three required obligations from the parties (UNDP and GOU):

- i. Endorsement of the project in writing by Deputy Minister of Agriculture responsible for the Department of Forestry and Djizak Oblast Khokimiyat.
- ii. Commitment by all parties to the establishment and long term maintenance of the biosphere reserve and, more specifically, to the in-kind contributions itemized under Section D: Inputs of this project document. In the case of the Department of Forestry and Djizak Oblast Khokimiyat this

⁵ WWF established in 2004 a memorandum of collaboration with the Department of Forestry of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, regarding the conservation of Bukhara Deer and its natural habitats in Uzbekistan.

commitment will be made in writing as part of the written endorsement of the project indicated above. In the case of the SCNP commitment will be recognized through signature of this project document

- iii. UNDP to designate the project area a focus area for relevant natural resource and sustainable livelihoods support either directly by UNDP or by other donors with UNDP facilitation.

These obligations were met as specified in the project document; through the signature by the Chairman of the SCNP (as the authority representing the GOU) and by the CEO of the GEF.

63. The design of the project was led by NABU (German Society for the Protection of Nature) which had been working in the region since 1992 to carry out initial biodiversity assessments. In 1998, with the support of a Project Development Facility (PDF) grant of USD 25,000 from GEF, a social assessment – using participatory rural appraisal techniques - was carried out on the basis of existing data and findings from the earlier work. The new findings indicated the importance of integrating in the project the issues related to diversification of livelihoods, appropriate zoning and management of protected areas, and issues related to the current difficult legal and tax environment for small scale economic activity. It was clearly identified that without reducing dependence on livestock based incomes and without reducing unsustainable types of land-use, there is little prospect in the area for either sustained rural livelihoods or the conservation of biodiversity. On this basis, a Medium Size Project (MSP) was developed in early 2000 and was approved by GEF in July 2000.

64. The project concept was based on the existing policy, legal and institutional frameworks. However, those were weak at the time of the design phase. The national protected area system had limitations with regard to its overall size, representation, conceptual approach, financing, legal framework and management/institutions. As per the project document, the PA system in Uzbekistan was faced with three categories of problems (see Section A.1.1.2 of the project document):

- its inability to meet basic biodiversity conservation objectives (i.e. due to poor ecosystem coverage, ecologically non-viable sizes, fragmentation);
- the lack of understanding and awareness at all levels in the Republic (decision makers, planners, general public) of the value and importance of biological conservation and rational use for the development of the country;
- the protected areas system's lack of future economic and social sustainability under the new political and socio-economic conditions.

Therefore, the project was designed and implemented in parallel to the need of strengthening the overall national protected area system. One of the strongest bases for the project was the recently approved National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

65. The project document included an exit strategy and an end of project expected situation. In addition the project document included – as part of the project strategy – the replication of the model(s) tested by the project. Under the previous terminology, the development objective indicator was “*The long term continued existence and security of globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets in the project area and the number of replications of similar protected area development in other parts of Uzbekistan/the region*”. Furthermore, the design included one outcome as “*New “inclusive” and sustainable human development-oriented approaches to the conservation of biodiversity in Uzbekistan developed and tested*”. It was part of the project to develop a model to be replicated in similar situation in Uzbekistan and in the region (see Section 4.5.6).

66. Near the completion of the project few comments/lessons to be learned are:

- The project had an adequate technical design but an unrealistic timing and sequence;
- The project was not too ambitious but the lobbying of the government (political process) for the creation of the NKBR should have started much earlier;
- The project design did not anticipate the need to change the Law on Protected Natural Areas which was necessary for creating a biosphere reserve in Uzbekistan. One reason for this oversight was that most of the project concept was done in 1997; which was just after the formulation of the Seville declaration (UNESCO-MAB) in 1995; which established a new statutory framework including the 3 functions of a BR and its related 3 management zones.

Logical framework

67. The project logical framework is rated as satisfactory. The logic of project intervention was well summarized in the logical framework; which was to address the problem stated in the prodoc. The log-frame started at the activity level, leading to outputs, then to immediate objectives and finally to the project goal. For each step of this chain of results, indicators were identified, source of their verification and the assumptions made for the project to achieve each particular results. The template used was the template relevant at the time of the design stage (1999-2000). Overtime and using the new log-frame template, the project immediate objectives became the outcomes (5) and the goal became the project objective.

68. Learning from the implementation and considering the current issue that the GOU hasn't yet approved/created the NKBR, a weak point of the project design (and its document) seems to be the analysis of the assumptions made, the risks analysis and the risk mitigation strategies. Related to the question of the creation of the BR, the logical framework contained one assumption "*That relevant government agencies and the Cabinet of Ministers / Parliament show adequate commitment to the timely approval and enactment of required legislation*". However, it is interesting to note that this assumption was not even mentioned among the most important project risks presented in the prodoc (chapter E). It seems like the assumption of creating the NKBR was a "*fait accompli*" – given the political context at the time - and the risks were more focused on issues such as long term GOU financial support to the NKBR and commitments to the project by the local authorities (*see analysis of risk in Section 4.2.4*).

Indicators

69. A list of indicators was part of the log-frame in the prodoc. For each expected result one or two indicators were identified. These indicators are a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators. They were used in the annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) where a baseline and a target had been established. The review of these indicators shows that the monitoring of these indicators measures well the actual progress made toward the achievements of the expected results. However, it is important to note that despite good progress made in various areas, the ultimate project long term sustainability (success) relies mostly on one indicator that is "the long term continued existence and security of globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets in the project area" with a target of an area legally designated (*see Section 4.2*).

Stakeholder Participation

70. Led by NABU, a detailed stakeholder analysis was conducted in the area at the design stage. The Local stakeholders included the rural population of the Nuratau-Kyzylkum area in general and more specifically land-users, representatives of traditional bodies and structures, teachers, local NGOs, state and private farms / businesses (including over 20 collectives), the Nuratau zapovednik administration, and the oblast and rayon administrations (3 oblast and 5 rayons). Some important stakeholders are the inhabitants of villages bordering the buffer and core areas (approx. 10,000 people) who are expected to benefit from the project. The total population estimated to inhabit the area covered by the proposed biosphere reserve is around 41,000. Though historically a small number of the people practiced extensive nomadism - having no permanent settlement and traveling large distances - this is no longer the case and seasonal grazing movements occur around settlements. Thus the overall population does not fluctuate significantly.

71. At the national level, the identified Stakeholders included: the National Commission for Biodiversity and the National Action Plan Coordination Group; the National Commission for Sustainable Development; the Forestry Department, the State Committee for Nature Protection; the Uzbek Academy of Science, the Uzbek Man and Biosphere Committee (UNESCO); other governmental agencies in charge of economic development, infrastructure, environmental education and NGOs. However, the National Commission for Biodiversity and the National Action Plan Coordination Group has never been functioning and despite existing the project has not worked closely with the National Commission for Sustainable Development.

72. The participation process was initiated gradually and considering the context, it is rated as satisfactory. The reason for this gradual engagement was due to the highly centralized and authoritarian system in the past and an absence of almost any form of civil society structures. Many obstacles existed in Uzbekistan to ensure full stakeholder involvement. Since 1995, contacts with the local people intensified and social assessment work started. Small economic initiatives by locals and the foundation of a local environmental NGO were supported. Funds from the PDF and from NABU had been used to conduct workshops, carry out discussions with leading

collaborators of the khokimiyats (local administrations) and the main land users such as shirkates (farm units) and leskhozets (forestry units) and a large number of informal interviews with local inhabitants. Workshops and individual meetings with the main state agencies in charge of nature protection and the leadership of local administrative structures took place. Basic social, demographic and economic data of the project area was collected.

73. In conclusion, the project was highly relevant in meeting the objectives of the UNCBD, the UNDP and the GEF, in responding to the development objectives of Uzbekistan and in meeting the needs of the target beneficiaries. Its design was satisfactory and the project document contains a convincing approach to address the existing problems. Replaced in the context at the time of the design of this project, there was no other real design option; though, based on what we now know, the timing and sequence of the design was too ambitious.

4.2. Project Effectiveness

74. Below are the findings on the effectiveness of the project in achieving its expected results. An overview of the key results achieved by the project is presented, followed by the project contribution to capacity development, the review of any unexpected project achievements and the review of the management of risks and the mitigation measures related to the implementation of the project. These findings are based on a review of project documents and interviews with key informants.

4.2.1. Achievements of Project Expected Outcomes

75. This is one of the most difficult areas to assess and to rate within the context of this terminal evaluation. On one hand the project performed very well, preparing studies, assessments, zoning for the creation of the NKBR and implementing the sub-projects to improve the livelihood of the population leaving in the NKBR area, adapting to the changing context and using different strategies to move ahead. On the other hand, despite much effort from the project management team, UNDP and the Stakeholders, the NKBR is not created yet and the project may end before its official creation – leaving all partners with the question: “So what?”

76. Nevertheless, based on the review of the project achievements and considering the complex context in which the project was implemented (*see Section 4.1.3*) – including the fact that the responsibility of creating the NKBR resides outside the project authority - the actual project results/achievements are satisfactory. The project had to adapt over its implementation and was able to utilize its resources to achieve good results and contribute toward the objective of the project which was to conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan and the region. This objective was to be achieved through five outcomes:

1. The unique national and global biodiversity value and the mosaic of natural and cultural landscapes in the project area conserved;
2. Local authorities and communities have a better awareness and valuation of biodiversity resources and services and an understanding of the principles of sustainable development;
3. The capacity of local authorities and communities to play an active role in the planning and management of natural resources and development of sustainable livelihoods in place;
4. Types of land use reduced within the project area with negative effects on the ecosystems and the basis established for the long term sustainable development of the area in place;
5. New “inclusive” and sustainable human development-oriented approaches to the conservation of biodiversity in Uzbekistan developed and tested.

77. The project design document (prodoc) lists also the expected end of project situation (Section B.2) with seven specific outcomes⁶:

1. Establishment of a Biosphere Reserve, on the basis of full stakeholder consultation, which provides an effective legal and administrative framework for the achievement of integrated conservation and sustainable rural development objectives, and an enabling environment for the development of appropriate income generation and small business activities.

⁽⁶⁾ These seven specific results were called outcomes in the prodoc using the previous UNDP terminology.

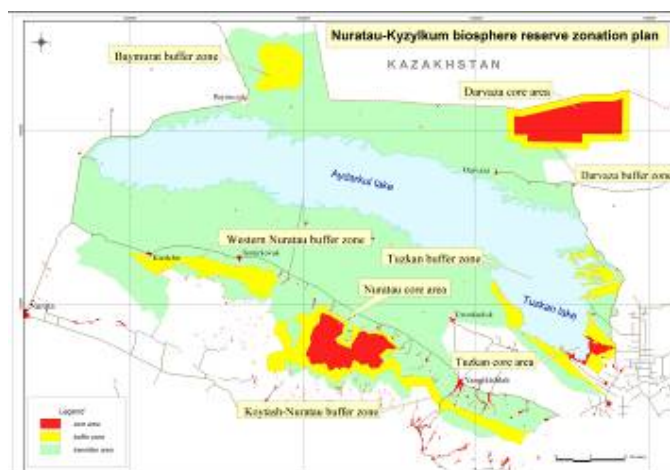
2. A detailed integrated management plan for the Biosphere Reserve which has been operationally tested during the project (pilot management plan) and upgraded/ revised on the basis of this experience and the recommendations of the stakeholders.
3. Increased awareness and valuation of biodiversity and its services by the public and local authorities / decision makers.
4. Increased capacity of stakeholders (local conservation/natural resources authorities, rural communities) to influence and play a role in the conservation/appropriate use of biodiversity resources and pursuit of sustainable local development.
5. Increased knowledge and experience of methods and approaches to address the major threats to biodiversity in the project area through community based land and natural resource use pilot projects.
6. Practical examples for protected areas authorities in Uzbekistan, and regionally, of new approaches to biodiversity conservation and key lessons / factors important for development of similar initiatives.
7. Heightened profile of the area, increased capacity and opportunity to attract other relevant and complementary initiatives by UNDP / partners / co-financiers, and improved legal/administrative environment for sustainable income generation initiatives and small businesses.

78. The interviews and the review of project documents indicate that much progress had been made to achieve these five outcomes (see Appendix 6 – List of Project Achievements). Most of these achievements can be grouped into two categories: (i) a “blue print” to create the Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve; which could also be a model for other protected areas in Uzbekistan and in the region; and (ii) strategies and related capacities emerging from the sub-projects to reduce the negative effects of local livelihoods on the ecosystems and to ensure their sustainable development in the long term; including awareness and education of local authorities and local population, community forestry, livestock and rangeland management, eco-tourism and environmentally friendly income generation activities.

The NKBR is a small representation of Uzbekistan
Chairman of SCNP

Establishment of the Biosphere Reserve

79. In order to establish the NKBR, the project undertook a series of steps including (i) an assessment/baseline divided in three thematic areas: ecology, information and socio-economic; (ii) a zoning plan delineating the core zones, buffer zones and the transition zones; (iii) a series of maps: zoning, land-users, hydrology, nature protection (however, no botanical and zoological map were done) – a GIS system was also prepared; and, (iv) three volumes of the NKBR Management plan: Volume 1: “General strategy, goals and perspectives”, Volume 2: “Regional description of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve” and Volume 3: “Action plan”. In 2003 and 2004 the project also contributed to the amendment of the Law on Protected Natural Areas (which was not expected – see Section 4.2.3) by preparing the draft version of several clauses of the law, participating in the assessment of the Law and by lobbying the government to get it approved. This new Law (2004) includes the concept of the BR and provides the legal framework for the creation of BRs in Uzbekistan. In 2003, the technical documents to constitute the biosphere reserve were packaged together and sent to the GOU through the Gosbiocontrol (project executing agency) to start the political process of legalizing the NKBR. Since 2003, the package was reviewed several times, was amended and was finally approved by all key ministries. It is now with the Cabinet of Ministers for final decision.



80. The process was lengthy and the project showed good flexibility to provide all required documentation and answer all questions. The table 4 below shows a summary of the major steps for the creation of the NKBR. Note that UNDP (and the project) sent a few letters (3) to speed up the process.

81. The project ends officially at the end of August 2007. It is difficult to “read the crystal ball” but the chance that the NKBR will be created in the next few weeks still exists. All interviewees confirm this possibility and all said that nothing is against the creation of the NKBR. From the interviews, it seems that no opposition exists to the creation of the NKBR; but the political process to establish the NKBR is lengthy and required an extensive review of the file which necessitated reviews, edits and changes. However, from the end of 2006, the five key Ministries approved the package and the complete file is now with the Cabinet of Ministers; which is the last step for the final decision to create the NKBR.

I haven't heard of no good reason why this biosphere reserve is not established
UNDP Resident Representative

Table 4: Road Map for the Establishment of the Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve (NKBR)

- April 2001 project start date
- April 2001 - January 2002 project planning phase
- Feb-July 2002 assessment/baseline - 3 teams: ecology, information and socio-economic.
- June 2002 prepare zoning plan for the BR (3 thematic reports) and series of maps
- July 2002 technical documents presented to PSC
- September 2002 prepare Management Plan (MP) with strong participation of partners.
- 2003 project realized the need to amend the Law on Protected Natural Areas.
- 2003 package for the creation of the NKBR was constituted
- 2003 the three regions approved the concept of creating the NKBR
- End of 2003 drafted 1st volume of the management plan (a first in UZ): general strategy, goal and objectives
- **November 2003 UNDP sent the package to Gosbiocontrol** . It included:
 - Reasoning why a biosphere reserve
 - Zoning plan completed in 2002
 - Supporting letters from Regional Governors
 - Draft Charter for the NKBR including the identification of needs for an administration: staff, office and budget
 - Draft decree for Cabinet of Ministers to establish the BR; including: establishment of the BR, declared boundaries for the 3 zones (core, buffer and transition), Nuratau zapovednik to become the core zone, Nuratau zapovednik administration to become the administration of the BR, the amended Law to guarantee PA and SCNP as the organisation responsible to establish the BR
- December 2003 the Gosbiocontrol sent the package to SCNP
- December 2004 amendment to the PNA Law was passed to include the BR concept (clause #44)
- Mid-2004 SCNP sent package to the five key ministries: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, State Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and State Cadastre, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Agriculture for their review by their specialists. Comments sent back to SCNP and Gosbiocontrol to address changes/comments (with project support)
- **Beginning of 2005 UNDP (and project) sent a letter to the five ministries to speed up the process**
- In 2005 Min. of Economy and State Committee on Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and State Cadastre agreed with the package; Min. of Agriculture agreed in general but was in disagreement with the organisation responsible (SCNP)
- End of 2005 drafted MP 2nd volume: analysis of local ecology and socio-economic development
- 2006 drafted 3rd volume of MP: action plan but not fully developed yet. Waited for establishment of the NKBR to have the consultation and finalization of this action plan
- **August 2006 UNDP (and project) sent a letter to the Minister of Finance (who was the first Prime Minister of the Government) to push the process**
- October 2006 Min. of Finance finally agreed; including an agreement on a budget (developed with project support) for the administration of the NKBR for 5 years starting in 2007
- October 2006 Min. of Justice got final package
- November 2006 Min. of Justice agreed and forward it to Cabinet of Ministers
- By Law Cabinet of Ministers can only hold a file for a month (must act before end of December 2006)
- January 2007 Cabinet of Ministers asked informally for more information
- **February 2007 UNDP sent a letter to Prime Minister to push the process (no reply yet)**
- February 2007 Chairman of SCNP agreed to meet the Prime Minister to inform him about the package and push for a decision. PM said the process should be coordinated with the President's office

Sustainable Conservation and Sustainable Livelihood Sub-projects

82. The achievements of the sub-projects are satisfactory. By integrating conservation and rural development objectives, these sub-projects aimed to demonstrate that sustainable conservation and sustainable livelihood goals are feasible and can become one goal. The objective of these sub-projects was to reduce within the project area

types of land use with negative effects on the ecosystems and to provide the basis for the long term sustainable development of the area. Representing tangible activities and implemented with a strong participation process, the achievements responded very well to the needs of the targeted population and their long term sustainability is ensured through a strong ownership by the Stakeholders since the start of their implementation. Overall, these sub-projects were able to develop local capacities of Stakeholders such as the land users, farmers, guesthouse owners, the veterinary stations and also the local forestry departments and other local government agencies to develop strategies for the management of the transition area of the biosphere reserve.

83. The project design document anticipated five (5) focus areas to demonstrate and test new approaches to achieve sustainable livelihood and biodiversity conservation: public awareness, community forestry, livestock farming, income generation and community fisheries. The project ended up implementing sub-projects in the following areas: public awareness, livelihood (income generation), community forestry, livestock/rangeland management and eco-tourism. The community fishery sub-project was cancelled in 2005; following attempts to kick-start it since 2002. In 2003, the project conducted a tender process to recruit an appropriate team of Consultants to implement this sub-project. After extending the deadline, only one proposal was received. During the same period, the government changed the legal framework; including a new management regime for the Aydar-Arnasay system of lakes. However, this new management regime had many inconsistencies and lacked clarity in many aspects and affected the original sub-project community fishery plan. This new situation was reviewed by the independent mid-term evaluation conducted in September 2004; which recommended cancelling this sub-project and reallocating the funds (US\$50,000) to other sub-projects. This recommendation was then presented to the 6th PSC (Dec. 15, 2004); which recommended the same - the cancellation of the fishery sub-project and the reallocation of the funds to other project activities. This decision was reviewed and also agreed by a Tri-Party-Review (TPR) meeting held in March 2005. Finally these recommendations were sent to the UNDP-GEF regional coordinator for approval.

84. **Public Awareness:** This sub-project was implemented from 2003 to 2005 (2 years) by “Eco-Centre Zapovednik” (a Russian NGO) which hired local staff for the implementation. Their achievements include built/renovated the biosphere reserve visit centre in Yangikishlok, developed biodiversity material for schools (teaching material), conducted seminars on biodiversity (including seminars for Teachers) and organized some ecological events such as information campaigns on particular biodiversity themes. However, the implementation by the “sub-contractor” did not go too well and the project did not pay the last tranche of the contract (*see Section 4.3.4*).

85. **Community Forestry:** This sub-project was implemented during the same period 2003-2005 (2 years). The project contracted LTSA (a Scottish organisation). Their achievements include the change of existing agreements between Land Users and the Forestry Department – from one year agreement to a minimum of 5 years to unlimited time. They also changed the “rental” scheme - from a scheme where Land Users had to give 70% of the harvest to the Forestry Department (and only 30% to Land Users); it was changed to the scheme of 50% to the Forestry Department and 50% to the Land Users. They established 9 areas to improve land: 20 ha of desert land where they supported the plantation of 10,000 local Saxaul (*Haloxylon*) and 42ha of mountain land where they supported the plantation of about 2,500 fruit seedlings (peach, apple, apricot, pear, walnut, etc.). This mountain land was regained from arid mountain area land which – in the past - was cultivated by their ancestors.



The project also financed the material cost of fences for these 9 areas and the local owners planted 20,000 poplars (seedlings produced locally) for the production of wood for construction and firewood. They conducted seminars for a total of 650 participants, prepared a manual on community forestry and created an association of Land Users; which includes the district governors, the staff from the Forestry Department and the project staff. This association is not yet fully sustainable and the coordination is to be done by the NKBR once created. However, if the NKBR is not created its sustainability is questionable over the short term.

86. **Livestock/Rangeland Management:** This sub-project was implemented during the period 2003-2005 (2 years). Initially, the project contracted RDB (a Dutch Trust) to implement the sub-project; however, after the inception report and transparency problems with the management of finances in the contract, the project management team decided to cancel the contract (*see Section 4.3.4*). On this basis, the decision had been made to

implement this sub-project with a local team (including an international consultant) hired and supervised by the project management team. Their achievements include seminars/training sessions, development of models to improve the quality of livestock and models to improve rangeland management, establishment of an Association of Rangeland Users (including a Charter), development of a proposal to improve the legislation related to the management of rangeland – which was sent to the Ministry of Agriculture, development/renovation of 5 Veterinary Stations and financing of 2 “grinding” machines to improve the feed for animals in winter.



Veterinary Station of Sartikan

87. The main objective of this sub-project was to remove barriers for good livestock and rangeland management. The land used for rangeland is leased by GOU to Land Users for 39 years. With the support of the project, the Stakeholders proposed to legalize the establishment of a rangeland management system including the control of animals. This system would estimate the carrying capacity of the available rangeland after the spring of each year and establish the livestock capacity for the year; including the share for each member. The management plan was prepared with the participation of farmers and it was forwarded to the GOU at the end of 2006 for review and action. This management plan was approved at the regional level and they are now looking for national action to legalize the process. This rangeland management system would be first applied to the NKBR but would also be applicable to all similar environments in Uzbekistan. However, due to the fact that the NKBR is not created yet, this process was halted and its long term sustainability is questionable if the NKBR is not created.



Mr. Suratbek Yusupov, Director of Institute of Karakul Sheep Breeding Center.

88. In addition to rangeland management the project also supported the improvement of livestock productivity. Since independence, the individual opportunities (as opposed to collective farming) resulted in a large increase of the number of livestock; which negatively impacted the local rangeland (over-grazing, loss of biodiversity and land degradation). The project supported activities to increase the productivity of the livestock (breeding and artificial insemination) and to improve the management of livestock (better feed in winter, veterinary stations/vaccinations and selling of livestock in the fall to reduce livestock for winter).



"Grinding Machine" to improve winter feed

89. **Livelihood/Income Generation:** This sub-project was implemented during the period 2005-2007 (2 years). The project partnered with DED (the German Development Service; a non-profit-making organisation funded by the German government); which provided a rural development expert for 24 months. The budget for this sub-project was Target of Resource Allocation from Core (TRAC): USD 60,000, DED: USD120,000 in kind and other in kind: USD10,000, Other: USD13,760. The sub-project achievements include:

- **Applied Technology:** As a demonstration and the potential for local replication, the project financed a biogas system (USD 2,000 and USD500 provided by the recipient) to provide energy to a household (mostly cooking and heating of dwelling in winter); supported the capacity development of a mechanic (village of Andegen) to build hydro-pumps - using an ancient technology which requires only water pressure as energy. The mechanic produced the first 5 pumps with the support of the project which were sold for an average price of 70-80k sums (about USD65-70). Then he produced 10 additional water pumps which he now sells for 150k sums (about USD125). The project also supported the installation of a wind powered water-pump. The project partnered with a local group called “Introducing Appropriate Water Pumping Technology to Rural Uzbekistan: The Hydraulic Ram and Mechanical Wind Pump”. This group received a grant from the British Embassy (USD12,180) for these applied technology initiative (co-financing).



Water Pump at Yukari Uhum

- *Guesthouses*: Following the establishment of 4 guesthouses supported by the eco-tourism and hunting sub-project, the livelihood/income generation sub-project team supported further the development of these guesthouses for eco-tourism. They provided methodological support and the cost of building/renovation was supported by the owners.
- *Micro-funding*: The project supported the development of a micro-funding scheme; using the Uzbek Credit Union system. The Credit Union organisation accepted to open an office in the town of Yangikishlok; the place where the NKBR information center is located. In October 2006, the UNDP gave a free interest loan of USD5,000 to the Credit Union of Yangikishlok called the “Biosphere Fund”. On the basis of this fund, the Credit Union offered loans from 100,000 sums to 1,000,000 sums (USD80 to USD800) with a monthly interest of 3% which is kept by the Credit Union⁷. The maximum duration of each loan is 6 months and the borrower has to bring 120% of the requested loan as collateral. The agreement between UNDP and the Credit Union is ending in June 2007 but discussions are on-going to extend this date. So far, 9 loans were made and 5 borrowers reimbursed their loans. One objective of these loans is to provide financing to environmentally friendly proposals. Farmers can access these loans but not for livestock which can impact negatively the rangeland fragile ecosystems.
- *Creation of an NGO*: The project supported the formation of a local NGO (called “*Economy, Qualification and Consultation*”) which DED supports with one project staff until December 2007. This is viewed as a major accomplishment within the context whereby the GOU recently declared that NGOs have to be re-registered with the Ministry of Justice; which significantly decreased the number of registered NGOs in Uzbekistan. This NGO positions itself to help small and medium enterprises through business planning and the identification of the necessary financing.
- *Train Business Consultants*: The project team supported training seminars and forums to train business consultants. Eight business consultants have graduated from this training.

90. ***Eco-Tourism and Hunting***: This sub-project was implemented during the period 2004-2006 (2 years). The project contracted NCI (a German NGO – Nature Conservation International). Their achievements include the local assessment for eco-tourism development, marketing research to assess the national and international potential, analysis of existing tour companies, elaboration of tour products in the biosphere reserve area and the establishment of four (4) guesthouses in collaboration with the livelihood sub-project. Currently, one guesthouse is not operating; the other 3 are operating. So far 150 guests stayed in these guesthouses. However, no step was taken to officialise these guesthouses; in order to be part of the tourism industry in Uzbekistan. Within the current legal framework, this “non-official” status prevents the tour operators to market these guesthouses to foreign tourists. The sub-project is now completed; however, the fact that the NKBR is not created yet, leave this issue unresolved and, therefore, the long term sustainability of this eco-tourism initiative is questionable.



Guesthouse in Hayat kishlak

91. Regarding hunting, the project supported the organization of training sessions for rangers and the assessment of game species. Finally, the project prepared development plans for ecotourism and hunting for the NKBR but their implementation is pending for the creation of the NKBR. These plans are currently with the project and there is little chance that their ownership can be transferred and implemented by any relevant Uzbek’s organisation before the project end.

92. These sub-projects integrated conservation and rural development objectives. They demonstrated that sustainable conservation and sustainable livelihood goals are feasible and can become one goal by reducing within the project area the types of land use with negative effects on the ecosystems and by providing the basis for the long term sustainable development of the area. However, despite satisfactory achievements which should be sustained in the future, the non-existence of the NKBR prevented the project to develop, replicate and use these models further. These demonstrations could be replicated and the models used to improve the governance framework in the NKBR area and also in other similar areas in Uzbekistan.

93. Despite the satisfactory project achievements within the existing context, the project expected results

⁷ Market interest rates are between 8 and 14% per year but short term loan interest rate is 18% per year – however it is difficult to access. Credit Union (24 throughout Uzbekistan) does give micro-credit loan but at 5-6% interest per month.

(objective and outcomes) will not be all met during the lifetime of the project since the NKBR is not created yet. The strategy was to: (i) prepare the technical documents for the creation of the NKBR; (ii) create the biosphere reserve; (iii) form an administration and develop its capacity to manage the NKBR; (iv) develop a management plan for the administration for the management of the NKBR; (v) build awareness among local Stakeholders; (vi) develop the capacity of local authorities, decision makers and rural communities in conserving and use sustainably the local natural resources; (vii) demonstrate new approaches to achieve sustainable use of local natural resources; and (viii) evaluate and disseminate the lessons learned nationally and regionally. The project management team used adaptive management to adapt to the evolving context in Uzbekistan; in order to deliver most of the expected outcomes without the creation of the NKBR. However, few of these achievements are at risk of not being implemented further if the process of creating the NKBR would be abandoned. Nevertheless, the review conducted by the Evaluators indicates that no other strategies could have been followed. The project started as planned and it is only in year 3 (2004) that this issue started to be raised. Since 2004, the issue grew as the time passed by but - even with inside knowledge - no other options were really available at that time.

4.2.2. Contribution to Capacity Development

94. In addition to the project achievements described in Section 4.2.1, the project contributes also to capacity development. This achievement of the project is also rated as satisfactory. The overall implementation approach emphasized strong participation of Stakeholders and most of the project achievements are owned by the relevant Stakeholders. The target groups were empowered through the implementation process and each initiative was developed following a strong assessment; including socio-economic surveys of the target groups to identify the problems and their needs.

95. The case of the sub-projects is worth mentioning. Based on the implementation plan, the project management team developed each sub-project through a dialogue with the relevant target group(s). Once the initiative was identified, the project provided mostly technical assistance (the know-how) and the target groups provided the necessary capital investment and labour. Most of these initiatives were strongly rooted within the existing context and the capacity built will ensure their long term sustainability (see Section 4.5.2). For instance, the forestry sub-project helped some Land-Users to plant trees. The choice of trees were made by the Land-Users themselves and was often an expansion of their current fruit-tree plantations or a new specie with an attractive production such as apple or apricot which can be sold to an Austrian company - Marap HandelsgmbH from Vienna - to be exported to Europe as organic dried fruits.

96. All sub-activities were built on the local know-how and used local technologies or applied technologies which can be maintained locally. Another example is the manufacture of water pumps. The project worked closely with a local mechanic who was interested in developing this new product. The know-how was brought by the project and the rest was provided by the local mechanic. With the support of the project he produced the first 5 pumps which were sold for an average price of 70-80k sums (about US\$65-70). Then he produced another 10 water pumps which he now sells for 150k sums (about US\$125). The technology is well adapted to the local context, requires no energy beside water pressure and requires almost no maintenance (only a valve change after 3-4 years).



Water Pump for Sale!

97. At the regional and national level, the project contribution to capacity development is also tangible. The awareness and education campaigns through seminars and workshops developed the knowledge and skills of the relevant Stakeholders. For instance, these skills and knowledge were used to design and implement the project funded by UNDP-GEF “*Conservation of the “Tugai” Forest and the Strengthening of the Protected Areas System in the Amu Darya Delta of Karakalpakstan*”. They were also used by the Forestry Department which collaborated with UNDP to develop a new project to be funded by UNDP-GEF and that is aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the national strict nature reserve system through the demonstration of new conservation management approaches in the Surkhan protected area. The design of these two initiatives includes a lot of knowledge acquired during the lifetime of the NKBR project as well as the major lessons learned.

4.2.3. Unexpected Project Achievements

98. In addition to the expected project achievements which were discussed in Section 4.2.1, the project achieved two main unexpected results:

- The main piece of legislation for this project was the Law on Protected Natural Areas. This Law was done at a time when Uzbekistan had only strictly protected areas (Zapovedniks created under the Soviet system) and it aimed mostly at protecting these strictly protected areas in Uzbekistan. However, in the first two years of project implementation, the project management team realized that under this Law a biosphere reserve could not be legally created⁸. The project management team allocated resources to support the GOU to amend/redraft a new Law on Protected Natural Areas which was completed in 2004, approved by the Parliament the same year and signed by the President. The new Law provides a legal basis for the establishment of non-governmental owned protected areas and of biosphere reserves; including the NKBR and the merger of the existing Nuratau zapovednik and its Administration with the new biosphere reserve. It includes clause #44 on State Biosphere Reserves which states that a BR can be part of an international network of BR, are to be created by the a decision of the Cabinet of Ministers and can include three management zones: core zone, buffer zone and transition zone.
- The second unexpected result is not as tangible as the first one; however, it is of significant importance for the future of protected areas and biodiversity conservation in Uzbekistan. Through the various activities, the project contributed greatly to increasing the skills and knowledge of Stakeholders involved in the management of these PA at the local, regional and national levels. The uniqueness of the project and its BR concept responded very well to local and national needs related to the management of protected areas in the country. Stakeholders now understand the concept well and this new integrated and participatory approach to in-situ biodiversity conservation in Uzbekistan by integrating conservation and rural development objectives in order to achieve sustainable conservation and sustainable livelihood goals is well understood and recognized as the future for the long term sustainability of a national protected area system. This new knowledge is and will play a catalytic role in the reform of the PA system in Uzbekistan.

4.2.4. Risk and Risk Mitigation Management

99. The management of risks and their mitigation measures is rated as marginally satisfactory. An exhaustive list of assumptions was identified and presented in the log-frame and matched each expected results. One assumption is related to the official creation of the biosphere reserve by the GOU: “*That relevant government agencies and the Cabinet of Ministers / Parliament show adequate commitment to the timely approval and enactment of required legislation*”. However, as it is said in Section 4.1.7, this assumption was not part of the most important project risks presented in the prodoc (Chapter E). It seems like the assumption of creating the NKBR was a “*fait accompli*” and the risks were more focused on issues such as long term GOU financial support to the NKBR and commitments to the project by the local authorities. In the prodoc, four risks were identified as important; there are:

1. That central government will fail to adequately support the long term financing and recurrent costs of the Biosphere Reserve (*rated as a significant risk*)
2. That local authorities, institutions and communities will lack commitment to the objectives and activities of the project: (*rated as a significant risk*)
3. That administrative problems / lack of coordination will occur due to the inclusions of numerous oblast (region) and rayon (district) borders within the biosphere reserve (*rated as a small to medium significance*)
4. That pilot projects will fail to successfully demonstrate alternative or more appropriate natural resource use (*rated as medium to high risk*)

100. However, from a monitoring perspective, 5 risks were monitored in the UNDP-Atlas system. It included the 4 risks above, which were categorized respectively as #1-financial risk, #2-strategic risk, #3-operational risk

⁸ As analyzed in Section 4.1.7, the necessity to amend the PA Law had not been anticipated during the design phase of the project. However, the project management team had no choice and adapted its implementation plan to amend this Law and create the necessary legal framework for the creation of the NKBR.

and #4-operational risk. A fifth risk - categorized as political - was added in the PIR (APR)-2005: “*Government will not legally establish the Biosphere Reserve by the end of the project, which will not allow the project to logically complete all planned activities and reach envisaged objectives*” (rated as substantial risk). This risk was added in 2005 as an “additional risks or unexpected problems encountered during the last year of implementation”. The review of the progress reports indicate that the risk of the NKBR not being legally established during the project life became a reality in 2005. Rated as a substantial risk in the PIR-2005, it was recognized that the progress of establishing legally the biosphere reserve was not proceeding in accordance with the initial plan and timeframe. In the PIR-2006, an extensive explanation of this risk is provided; which indicates also the use of an adaptive management approach to deal with this risk. The project management team (incl. UNDP) played a very active role in lobbying the case within the GOU; including three official letters to state the issue and ask for this issue to be resolved, meetings with key Officials, etc. (see Section 4.2.1).

101. In term of mitigating risks, it is important to note that the project document included a Section on “Prior Obligations” which were required obligations to be met by the various parties before the project can start:

- i. Endorsement of the project in writing by Deputy Minister of Agriculture responsible for the Department of Forestry and Djizak Oblast Khokimyat.
- ii. Commitment by all parties to the establishment and long term maintenance of the biosphere reserve and, more specifically, to the in-kind contributions itemized under Section D: Inputs of this project document. In the case of the Department of Forestry and Djizak Oblast Khokimyat this commitment will be made in writing as part of the written endorsement of the project indicated above. In the case of the SCNP commitment will be recognized through signature of this project document
- iii. UNDP to designate the project area a focus area for relevant natural resource and sustainable livelihoods support either directly by UNDP or by other donors with UNDP facilitation.

These obligations were met as specified in the project document; through the signature by the Chairman of the SCNP (as the authority representing the GOU) and by the CEO of the GEF.

102. Overall, the project was effective in achieving its expected outcomes and it is rated as satisfactory. Despite the fact that the responsibility of creating the NKBR resides outside the project authority, the project was able to utilize its resources to achieve good results and contribute toward the objective of the project which was to conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan and the region.

4.3. Project Efficiency

4.3.1. Project Management Approach and Tools / Adaptive Management

103. The management of the project is highly satisfactory. The project was well managed and used adaptive management extensively to secure project outcomes while maintaining adherence to the overall project design. The project management team used the log-frame as a guide to implement the project and a reminder of what the project aimed to achieve. The only deviation from the log-frame was the cancellation of the fishery sub-project which was listed as the sub-activity 7.4 on the log-frame. However this change did not modify the overall structure of the log-frame and its chain of results. The log-frame used at the design stage was kept all along the implementation of the project. Despite being before the implementation of the UNDP-RBM approach, the Evaluators noted that this log-frame was already results oriented. The log-frame presents the “Intervention Logic” starting with the project goal, then immediate objectives (now called outcomes), outputs and activities and sub-activities. It is very much results-based oriented and the main difference with today’s log-frame template is that it provided more details about the chain of results. A log-frame now includes only the main objective and the expected outcomes (called immediate objectives before).

104. The adaptability and flexibility of the project was a key ingredient in the implementation of the project. Many examples could be described to demonstrate this adaptability. The need to amend the Law on Protected Natural Areas was an early example where the project adapted its work plan to address this unanticipated barrier. Recognizing that the biosphere reserve could not be created within the current legal framework, the project supported the State Committee on Nature Protection to draft a new Law to amend the existing one. The main amendment was the addition of the clause #44 which presents the concept of a biosphere reserve and its three

management zones and gives the authority to the Cabinet of Ministers to create biosphere reserves.

105. Another example is the adaptability of the project to support the passing of the decree to create the NKBR. As it is described in Table 4 in Section 4.2.1, the project constantly monitored the political process to create the NKBR and adapted its activities to the current needs of the day. Originally the NKBR was supposed to be created by the end of the second year of implementation; the project had to adapt its work plan to reflect this change of plan. Faced with the fact that this milestone was a critical milestone to achieve, the project management team allocated the necessary resources to this task to help the government through the process. The project supported the SCNP to put together the necessary package to present the case to the Cabinet of Ministers, to respond to questions from key Ministries and in three occasions to send letters to key Officials to speed up the political process.

106. As analyzed in Section 4.1.7 the scheduling and sequencing of the implementation phase in the project document were ambitious. The implementation was tightly scheduled and no time was built-in for contingencies; including the time for the political process to create the NKBR. As a result, the overall implementation was somewhat behind schedule. As most projects, it took a few months for the project management team to start being operational on the ground and the sub-projects started later than expected. However the project team was able to adapt the overall implementation schedule and complete all planned tasks by project end.

107. The planned project end date was August 2005. However, on the basis of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) recommendation (2004), the Parties agree on a time extension of the project to December 2006 with no budget increase. In November 2006, a TPR meeting discussed the timing issue and UNDP proposed the GOU an additional budget of US\$50,000 (from TRAC) and an extension to December 2007 if the NKBR is created by April 2007. If the NKBR would not be created by April 2007, the project will keep its same original budget and will close by the summer of 2007. The current status is that the NKBR is not created, the project obtained an additional UNDP-TRAC budget of US\$12,000 and the project will be closed by the end of August 2007.

108. During the review, one operational matter was mentioned as an on-going concern during the implementation of the project and that is the UNDP administration procedures. The Evaluators reviewed this area during the mission in Uzbekistan and agreed that these procedures are, sometimes, long and cumbersome; not adapted to some Uzbek realities such as paying expenses in rural areas by bank transfers. However, in the context of the GOU and UNDP policies, this particular financial matter may be a needed reality. In the context of a society that is mostly cash-based, the GOU has a policy to execute most payments through bank transfers and UNDP has to comply with this policy. Additionally, UNDP Headquarters has also a policy to increase transparency and maintain good paper trails for all financial transactions. Therefore, this issue will exist until the banking system improves drastically in Uzbekistan and for the time being a careful use of cash payments in rural areas by projects should be accommodated.

109. Regarding the administrative procedures, they are lengthy and, in some cases, include a long line of authority. Most project payments need to go through a series of steps which include few signatures (authorizations) before a payment can be processed. The review of these steps indicates that the project administration process is not efficient and, as a result, creates some frustration among the people involved in the process and may force the project team and/or suppliers to find short-cuts to improve this efficiency.

Table 5: Summary of UNDP procedures to process a project expense

<p>The expense is included in the Annual Work Plan (AWP) and a supplier contract exists with the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The project team prepares a Request for Direct Payment (RDP) – prepared by Administrative Finance Assistant (AFA), signed by Project Manager (PM), sent to UNDP finance unit for payment.• For payment >\$2,500: the project team prepares a Request for Direct Payment (RDP) – prepared by Administrative Finance Assistant (AFA), signed by Project Manager (PM), sent to UNDP to be reviewed and approved by Environment Specialist (ES) or Head of Environmental Unit (HEU), sent to UNDP finance unit for payment in 2-3 business days and project gets voucher afterward indicating it was paid. <p>The expense is included in the AWP but NO supplier contract is in place (most of project expenses in the field):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A memo is written by AFA, signed by PM, sent to UNDP-CO Environmental unit, ES checks and signs it, HEU checks and signs it, the memo then goes to the procurement unit which signs it, and then it goes to the Operation Manager (representing UNDP authority) who signs it. At this point the
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memo goes back to the project office for the preparation of the first RDP (on the basis of terms of payment up to 50% on receiving goods/services), then the second RDP is processed for the remaining payment of 50%. For items less than \$500 terms of payment were simplified recently and are 100% advance paid for goods/services (one RDP)

- For DSA, the PM authorizes the payment; it then goes to the HEU for signature and then the process goes to the finance unit for payment.
- To establish a supplier contract (for repetitive business), the project office gets 3 bids and selects one which is documented in a memo.
- The Main problem is for small items such as a phone card for 20,000 sums. Considering the above, the administration process costs a lot more in time and expenses to process the payment than the cost of the phone card.

110. Finally, the project produced a large amount of information. This information exists in both, electronic form and paper form and it is available for those who are requesting it. Information was used by the project management team to manage and monitor the progress of the project. It was also used to disseminate some of the results to other similar projects in the region such as the regional ECONET project funded by UNEP, GEF and WWF, other UNDP-GEF projects in Uzbekistan in the same area (Tugai and Kugitang), GTZ funded projects in the region and the UNDP-GEF “*Integrated Conservation of Priority Globally Significant Migratory Bird Wetland Habitat*” project in Kazakhstan. However, currently, this body of knowledge is utilized mostly on an ad-hoc basis (on demand). It could be more utilized; its access should be extended to all. Using web technologies, this body of knowledge should be loaded onto the web and anybody should be able to access it. The numerous models, manuals, plans, assessments and other pieces of project information should be posted to a web site and be available to whoever wants to access it.

4.3.2. Financial Planning and Management

111. The accounting and financial system used by the project management team was satisfactory for the management of this project. Since UNDP implemented the UN ATLAS system, the project finances were managed by this system and accurate and timely financial information was produced for the project management team; including on an ad-hoc basis. However, due to the UNDP-RBM implementation in 2004, the detailed project financial information is difficult to obtain per output (or outcome). The budget was allocated per input line (8) until end of 2003 then by activity (6) for the remaining years. Nevertheless, a budget was established yearly during the last quarter of the calendar year for the coming year. If some budget revisions were necessary during the year, these revisions needed to be approved by a TPR meeting before it was sent to UNDP-GEF Regional Coordination Unit for approval.

112. As of the end of August 2007 (project end-date), the estimate is that USD 716,531 will be spent from the UNDP-GEF budget of USD 725,000 (99%) and USD 244,270 will be spent from the UNDP TRAC budget of USD 242,100 (101%); for a total expended of USD 960,801 that is 99.3% of the budgeted funds.

Table 6: UNDP-GEF & TRAC Disbursements of Funds

Item	Budget	FY2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	Total
UNDP/GEF	725,000	22,908	90,639	126,017	102,172	133,775	170,580	70,440	716,531
UNDP TRAC	242,100	12,734	25,713	24,769	65,274	37,677	40,508	37,593	244,270
Total	967,100	35,643	116,352	150,787	167,446	171,453	211,088	108,033	960,801

(*) UNDP-TRAC includes an initial budget of USD 170,000 plus the budget allocated to the community development and livelihoods support sub-project (USD 60,000) and an additional budget of USD 12,100 decided in June 2007

(**) the figures for FY2001-2006 are actual expenditures. For FY2007 there are the latest estimates to end of August 2007.

113. The available financial information did not allow the Evaluators to assess the actual project cost by output or outcome or by sub-project. This information would have been useful to analyze how much was spent on each sub-project versus the rest of the project activities. However, the overall project achievements are cost-effective;

they benefited from the emphasis on using national staff in the latter part of the project. The Staff was also diligent when deciding to engage a major project expense and always tried to get the best value for the project. An example was the purchase of vehicles whereby it was proposed to buy second hand vehicles; they finally bought low cost vehicles from Russia avoiding the high cost of imported Japanese cars.

114. It is also important to note that if we apply the concept of “value for money” to the project achievements, this value will differ greatly (and not slightly) according to the outcome of the process to establish the NKBR. Despite good project achievements (*see Section 4.2.1*), the final impact (*see Section 4.4.1*) would be very different if the NKBR is created or not; affecting the value of these achievements by a wide margin.

115. The project finances have never been audited externally. UNDP-Uzbekistan operates on the basis of the NEX (National EXecution) modality which is comparable to the DEX (Direct EXecution) modality in other countries. It does not transfer funds for implementation of projects to the Government. Therefore, all financial operations are managed by UNDP-Country Office; however, UNDP and the project team report financial information to the PSC once a year. When using the NEX modality, no external audits of projects are conducted as per UN Corporate requirement; only internal audits are conducted by UNDP Headquarters. One internal audit of UNDP-Uzbekistan was conducted in 2006 with this project selected as a sample project to be audited. However, at the time of this report the internal audit was not completed and no information was available.

4.3.3. Quality of Technical Assistance / Use of National and Local Capacity

116. The quality of technical assistance used by the project and the development of national and local capacity was high and it is rated highly satisfactory. Despite some turn-over at the beginning of the project due to Project Managers not responding well to the requirements of the position, the project was able to assemble over time a technical assistance team well qualified to carry out day-to-day implementation activities. The staff was also highly motivated and dedicated to the project, going often beyond the call of duty. The project management team developed excellent working relationships with the project Stakeholders; a necessary step to implement and succeed in this type of project emphasizing capacity development.

117. The project used a mix of international and national staff to bring the necessary mix of skills and knowledge needed to implement the project and also to develop the capacity of national staff over time. The project started with the support of international staff (and national staff) but over time the emphasis shifted to employ more national staff. For instance, the Chief Technical Advisor for the project was hired from the start of the project on the basis of 3 months per year at the beginning of the project, then 2 months per year after two years and ended up with only a few days per year near the end of the project. A similar situation was with an international Technical Advisor hired by the project to help implementing the ecotourism and sustainable hunting sub-project. From a full time position, the Advisor decreased his time on the project over time, transferring responsibilities to local staff until the end of his contract.

118. The national staffs were technically employed by UNDP and, therefore, were considered as UNDP employees. They benefited from most of the training activities conducted for the staff of UNDP and also from training activities conducted by partners such as study tours in Germany and Kazakhstan; contributing to upgrading their skills in various areas of project management. Additionally, the experience itself and the work environment emphasizing team work, also contributed greatly to upgrading their technical and management skills. At project end, the project staffs are highly skilled and knowledgeable and are an asset which UNDP may consider to value on future projects.

4.3.4. Project Delivery Mechanisms / Partnerships

119. The project delivery mechanisms were satisfactory. The Executing Agency of the project is the Gosbiocontrol; a body under the SCNP. The Executing Agency nominated the Deputy Chief of its Unit as the Project Coordinator. The responsibility of the Project Coordinator was to provide an official focal point and monitor the progress of the project for the central government level (*see more in Section 4.3.5*).

120. The project had a Project Steering Committee (PSC) under the Chairmanship of the Project Coordinator to oversee project progress and ensure an effective coordination of all parties. The PSC had 19 members

representing the SCNP, the Forestry Department, the three (3) Governors from the area, 5 Mayors (from district level in the area), 3 members from the regional SCNP, 1 UNDP representative and also ad-hoc participants linked to current issues. A change of membership occurred in 2005 and, currently, the PSC does not include a member of the Cabinet of Ministers. The initial plan was that the PSC would form the basis for the Biosphere Reserve Management Board (BRMB) which would be officially established at the time when the Biosphere Reserve is legally gazetted. For the remaining part of the project the BRMB would take over the responsibilities of the PSC. However as the NKBR is not created yet, the PSC stayed in existence since the start of the project. They met approximately twice a year to give directions to the project but with no decision-making power, this body had limited power on the project.

121. The main overseeing body for strategic directions of the project was the Tri-Partite Review (TPR) process. The TPR included UNDP, the Executing Agency and the Project Management Team. The project reported to the TPR and there was a TPR meeting once a year to review the progress of the project, discuss the current issues and make any decisions related to the implementation of the project. The UNDP Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) was kept up-to-date on the TPR process.

122. Locally, the project cooperated with the Nuratau Zapovednik Administration Staff (which was supposed to be merged with the new administration of the NKBR). They conducted training seminars together. However, due to the delay in creating the NKBR and the currently strict rules and regulations for the Zapovedniks, it prevented the Nuratau Zapovednik Administration Staff to work closer with the project team as their respective mandates were too different.

123. The project worked with the local Forestry Departments; particularly to carry out the forestry sub-project which included plantations of trees for both fruits and wood productions. These local Forestry Departments played a key role in the implementation of the project; particularly by providing the seedlings and technical advice in community forestry. They should also play a key role in the long term sustainability of the achievements from the forestry sub-project.

124. The project also worked closely with the local authorities of the Djizak, Navoi and Samarkand Oblasts (and also of the respective Rayons of Farish, Nurota, Kenimeh, Koshrabad and Payarik); which are three administrative territories where the NKBR is located. These authorities (at both Oblast and Rayon levels) participated in the establishment of zones for the NKBR and are planned to be part of the Biosphere Reserve Management Board once it will be created. The Farish Rayon was the main beneficiary of project activities; specially the sub-projects and had the full support of the Governor.



125. At the local level, the project developed good relationships with all local partners/stakeholders. It was recognized, for instance, by the Governor of Farish. Once the local communities and local Leaders understood the concept and started to see the value of the NKBR for their livelihood, there were keen in partnering with the project to benefit from the various training seminars and the technical assistance available to them. The project had no problem to find partners for the implementation of the sub-projects.

126. Finally, by design, some project activities (the Public Awareness component and the sub-projects: community forestry, fishery, sustainable livelihood and eco-tourism/hunting) were to be implemented through sub-contractors with a preference given to NGOs; particularly national and local NGOs if sufficient capacity can be demonstrated.

We learned how hard it is to work with sub-contractors!
Project Management Staff

In the context of Uzbekistan and Central Asia, the experience with this model was marginally satisfactory. The contract with “Eco-Centre Zapovednik” - a Russian NGO which hired local Staffs – for the implementation of the public awareness component did not go too well. Following delays in finalizing all planned activities – including the report on the Eco-Education Strategy Information Dissemination - the project decided to not pay the last tranche as per the contract’s terms of

payment. The contract with RDB (a Dutch Trust) to implement the livestock and rangeland management was cancelled after the inception report on the basis of transparency problems with the management of finances (particularly high overheads) in the contract and the lack of willingness to address these issues. Finally, on a better note, the contract with LTSA (a Scotland organisation) to implement the forestry sub-project; the Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA) with DED to implement the sustainable livelihood sub-project; and, the contract with NCI (a German NGO) to implement the eco-tourism sub-project went well. However, no real local capacity was built through this process. One lesson learnt by the project management team is that the budgets for these sub-projects were too small to attract good NGOs; particularly international NGOs with good project implementation track records. However, when this model works, the assistance and mentoring from these organisations have a positive impact on the Local Specialists' capacity throughout the implementation of the project.

4.3.5. Roles, Capacity and Efficiency of Executing Agency and UNDP-CO

127. The efficiency of the Gosbiocontrol as the project executing agency was satisfactory. This unit is a national specialised inspections body, responsible for the conservation of flora and fauna and the management of one reserve in Uzbekistan. It operates under the SCNP; a Ministry-like authorized coordinating body for nature protection in Uzbekistan. One particularity of this structure is that the SCNP reports directly to the lower house of Parliament (Oliy Majlis). The Executing Agency has four regional representations in Uzbekistan. It nominated the Deputy Chief of its Unit as the Project Coordinator. The responsibility of the Project Coordinator was to provide an official focal point and monitor the progress of the project for the central government level. His key tasks were to monitor and report on project progress to the Chairman of SCNP and the Minister of Agriculture, provide assistance in the coordination of the various project partners, and provide support and assistance to the project in ensuring the processing of legislation and other high level decisions required by the project. The Project Coordinator is much involved with the project management team to resolve the issue of creation of the NKBR and played a critical role in coordinating project activities with the government; including the SCNP, the Parliament, the Ministry of Finance and the Cabinet of Ministers.

128. The efficiency of the UNDP-CO is rated overall as satisfactory. Initially, the role and the capacity of UNDP-CO was an issue which was raised during the mid-term evaluation (September 2004). At this time, UNDP-CO had no environmental unit and as a consequence was providing a very limited support to the project. However, since the creation of the Environmental Unit within UNDP (end of 2004), an environmental capacity exists within UNDP and the Unit fulfilled the roles and responsibilities expected (and obligated in exchange of receiving a management fee) from a GEF Implementing Agency. However, the procedures to administer the UNDP project funds are perceived as long and cumbersome - (*see Section 4.3.1*). Since the creation of a business center at UNDP-CO in 2004 whereby all project administrations funded by UNDP were put together at UNDP⁹, the administrative procedures to process a project expenditure is long and redundant (*see Table 5 in Section 4.3.1*). However, the business center provides also services such as hiring consultants, hiring staffs, copying, etc. in exchange of an administration fee for each of these services which is charged to the project budget when used. The business center model was implemented in Kazakhstan where it works well. In the case of Uzbekistan this approach combined with the emphasis on payment by bank transfers (instead of cash) does not seem to be very efficient.

4.3.6. Country Ownership / Stakeholders Participation

129. The country ownership of the project is marginally satisfactory. Despite responding well to the needs of the target groups at both national and local levels and a good participation of Stakeholders during the design phase, the delay in creating the NKBR has impeded a greater sharing of the project responsibilities and a greater ownership by the Stakeholders. During the first phase to prepare the documents for the creation of the NKBR, the relevant institutions were much engaged in the process; including the national and regional institutions and the local authorities at both the Oblast and Rayon levels. The creation of the NKBR would have emphasized this ownership by becoming a reality and the need for these institutions to be engaged in the management of the new biosphere reserve. The Forestry Department would have participated greatly in the formation of the new Administration; including the Nuratau Zapovednik Administration Staff. The SCNP and its Agency would have

⁹ Except some administrative functions for large projects such as this project.

taken the lead role in establishing the NKBR and the local authorities would have been involved in the establishment of the NKBR as well.

130. However, instead of this scenario, the NKBR had not been established yet and, as a result, this further engagement of the Stakeholders did not take place during the lifetime of the project. Instead, faced with this delay in the establishment of the NKBR, the project management team focussed a large amount of resources on this matter, to review, analyze, draft, revise and “push” proposals through the political system with the aim of getting the NKBR established. By not having the reserve established, the new Administration could not be formed; the mandate of the Nuratau Zapovednik Administration was kept the same: to “strictly” protect the Nuratau Zapovednik; which limited further collaborations with the project; and, the SCNP could not take the lead in establishing this biosphere reserve; including the certification process with the UNESCO-MAB network. From a country ownership point of view, the review indicates that since 2004, the entire process of transferring the responsibilities from the project to the Stakeholders is basically on hold until the NKBR is established. During this time, the responsibility and the focus of the project to support the establishment of the NKBR prevented this transfer.

131. Nevertheless, the approach used to implement the sub-projects emphasized the development of local capacities and was based on a strong participation of local Stakeholders. The participation of stakeholders – particularly at the local level – is rated as satisfactory. As a result, the achievements of these sub-projects are owned by the recipient Stakeholders and the long term sustainability of these achievements should be guaranteed. A good example is the creation of the Youth Center in the village of Birlashgan. The project with the support of local Leaders (mostly Teachers from the local school) surveyed the village (a settlement of about 35 families) to assess their social needs. The result was a need to create a Centre for young boys and girls. In order to open it, the Leaders (Teachers) organized a lottery to raise the necessary funds. Then, they approached the local school to get a room for the Centre. It has currently 30 permanent young members and 15 other “part-timers”. The Youth Centre has now 4 clubs: volley ball, dancing, cooking and sewing; and they recently organized a puppet theatre. They also organized biodiversity related activities in the school such as contest drawing, seminar on biodiversity, field visits of protected areas, etc. Since the Leaders of the Youth Centre are also Teachers at the school, there is a good integration of biodiversity programmes into the school curriculum. The Youth Centre plans now to have its own building. A similar ownership exists with the Land Users and the plantation of fruit trees, the owners of the guesthouses, the managers/owners of the veterinary stations, the livestock owners, etc.

132. What is missing into all of this is the existence of the NKBR and an Administration to manage the area. These sub-projects would have been implemented under the Administration umbrella and the ownership fully transferred to the Administration; particularly for the follow-up activities such as the livestock models and rangeland management plan which should be discussed with the appropriate national institutions and take the necessary actions to improve these activities in the biosphere area.

133. As reviewed in Section 4.1.7, many obstacles existed in Uzbekistan to ensure full stakeholder involvement and the participation process was initiated gradually; including with the local authorities. Overall the project has succeeded well in developing the participation of local Stakeholders; which led to a good ownership of project activities by local stakeholders. However, the ownership of the project by stakeholders at the national level was not as good; it is reflected by the non-creation of the NKBR and the lower than expected co-financing by the GOU (*see Section 4.3.7*).

4.3.7. Fund Leveraging

134. Overall, the capacity of the project to leverage funds to co-finance project activities is rated as marginally satisfactory. As indicated in the table 7 below, it is estimated that at the end of the project (end of August 2007), the total co-financing will be USD 238,707 versus USD 502,380 planned in the project document.

Table 7: Project Partners and Co-financing

Partner	Initial Budget (US\$)	Estimated at end of Project (US\$)
NABU	\$22,000	\$22,000
Gov. of Uzbekistan (in-kind)	480,380	55,000
DED		128,530
Fond Friedrich Ebert		2,070
Swiss Embassy		1,990
USAID via NGO Khamdard		500
Marap HandelsgmbH		700
British Embassy		27,917
Total	\$502,380	\$238,707 ¹⁰

135. The figures presented above indicate that the co-financing did not materialize as planned at the design stage. The major co-financing contribution was supposed to be an in-kind contribution from the GOU. However, this in-kind contribution has not been forthcoming according to the stated amount; only about 11% of the planned amount was estimated as a final contribution from the GOU. As per the PIR 2006, this change is explained by a certain level of competition and conflict of interests between the governmental agencies that were expected to work jointly and contribute to the project success. A large amount of this in-kind contribution was supposed to be the contribution from the Nuratau Zapovednik Administration which – because of the non-establishment of the NKBR – did not materialize.

136. Nevertheless, the smaller-than-planned actual GOU in-kind contribution (\$55,000) was from the executing agency; particularly the time dedicated by the National Project Coordinator to the project activities and from the local authorities who supported the project interventions and provided technical support in the form of buildings and transportation.

137. On the positive side, the project team has managed to attract additional resources to implement the Community Livelihoods sub-project. UNDP has committed an additional USD 60,000 in cash (from TRAC) and DED provided a Rural Development Specialist for two years; a contribution estimated at USD 120,000. Additionally during the implementation of the project, micro-grants were obtained from various sources for punctual support; including the Fond Friedrich Ebert, the Swiss Embassy, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) via the NGO Khamdard and Marap HandelsgmbH (*see table 7 above*).

138. The British Embassy financed two separate activities. The first one was an extension of the "Community Forestry" or – as it was renamed - Joint Forest Management with a grant of USD 15,737 paid directly to the Subcontractor (LTS Int.). The second activity was an initiative by a local "unregistered group" called "Introducing Appropriate Water Pumping Technology to Rural Uzbekistan: The Hydraulic Ram and Mechanical Wind Pump". The British Embassy provided a grant of USD12,180 to this group.

4.3.8. Monitoring Approach and Progress Reporting

139. The monitoring and progress reporting of the project is rated as satisfactory. It was done according to UNDP and GEF procedures. Over time the UNDP progress reporting procedures changed and the project reported its progress according to the relevant format. The most recent PIR (2006) includes basic project data, progress and rating of achievement of project objectives, progress and rating of project implementation, review of risks, any adjustments to project strategy and timeframe, financial information, procurement data, lessons learned and project contribution to GEF strategic targets in biodiversity.

140. A list of one or two indicators per expected results was identified during the design phase (log-frame).

⁽¹⁰⁾ An additional USD 60,000 (livelihood sub-project) and USD 12,000 (project extension) from UNDP TRAC could be counted as co-financing. However, they are already counted in the UNDP TRAC budget as part of the overall project budget (see Table 6)

These indicators were used in the annual PIRs where a baseline and a target had been established. The review of these indicators shows that the monitoring of these indicators measured well the actual progress made toward the achievements of the expected results. However, it is important to note that despite good progress made in various areas, the ultimate project long term sustainability (success) relies mostly on one indicator that is “the long term continued existence and security of globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets in the project area” with a target of an area legally designated.

141. The progress of the project was also reported by measuring its contribution against the GEF strategic targets in biodiversity by responding to a few questions related to Biodiversity (BD)1: Protected Areas; BD2: Spatial, Sectoral, Market and Organization/Business Mainstreaming; and, BD4: Lessons Learning, Dissemination, Uptake. This monitoring information was also part of the PIRs.

142. Overall, the project was well monitored. The risks were reviewed once a year and the project implementation strategy was adapted accordingly. For instance, the establishment of the NKBR has been monitored closely during the last few years and reported in the annual progress reports (PIRs). In the PIR 2006, a full analysis is provided for this particular risk (no legal establishment of the NKBR) including an overview about this risk and the recommendations to move forward.

143. However, the project did not use the Tracking Tool for GEF Biodiversity Focal Area Strategic Priority One: Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems at National Levels that is to measure progress in achieving the targets and indicators established at the portfolio level under Strategic Priority One and Strategic Priority Two of the biodiversity focal area. This is a GEF-2 project and at the time of project approval, the METT was not used (and was not compulsory). Currently, these targets and indicators are being (and recommend to be) tracked for all GEF-3 projects and will be tracked for all GEF-4 projects.

144. This tracking tool is to provide an assessment of protected area management effectiveness. It is derived from the World Bank/WWF Alliance for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Use Site-Level Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) for Protected Areas and from the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) framework. This METT is aimed at helping reporting progress on management effectiveness of protected areas and does not replace more thorough methods of assessment for the purposes of adaptive management or GEF Implementing Agencies’/Executing Agencies’ own monitoring processes. The tracking tool has been developed to provide a quick overview of progress in improving the effectiveness of management in individual protected areas. It is a tool providing assessment information to protected area managers on the management steps for a protected area. It focuses mostly at the output level of a project and is limited in providing an assessment of the achievement of project outcomes. This tracking tool includes 30 indicators to be monitored and it is to be applied three times during the lifetime of a project: at work program inclusion or GEF-CEO endorsement, at project mid-term, and at project completion¹¹.

145. In conclusion, the project was well managed and the resources utilized efficiently; it is rated as satisfactory. It used adaptive management extensively to secure project outcomes while maintaining adherence to the overall project design. Despite some Staff turnover during the first few years of the project, the technical assistance team was well qualified to implement the project; was highly motivated toward goal achievement and used/developed the capacity of the national staff. The project delivery mechanisms were good with a PSC to oversee the progress of the project twice a year and a Tri-Partite Review (TPR) process to review the progress and implementation issues and make the necessary decisions. The implementation approach emphasized a strong participation of Stakeholders and most of the project achievements are owned by the relevant Stakeholders.

4.4. Project Impacts

146. This section comments on the potential to achieve the long term goal and objectives of the project based on the outcomes achieved during the lifetime of the project.

¹¹ More information can be found at http://www.thegef.org/uploadedFiles/Focal_Areas/Biodiversity/GEF_SP_1_Tracking_Toolrev.doc.

4.4.1. Potential to Achieve Long Term Project Goal and Objectives

147. The potential for the project to achieve its long term goal and objective exists. However, due to the risk that the project may end without the NKBR established legally, this potential is rated as marginally satisfactory. Despite good achievements of project outcomes (see Section 4.2.1), the long term strategy will only be fully achieved if the NKBR is created. Additionally, the long term potential for the project to make an impact on the protected area system in Uzbekistan was hampered by the delay in the creation of the biosphere reserve.

The creation of the biosphere reserve is like to build a house; the construction is not completely finished but a basis exist and the Stakeholders should carry on until the construction is finished
GEF Climate Change Focal Point

148. As per the rating for the achievements of project expected outcomes, this is also a difficult area to assess and to rate. This terminal evaluation report is written almost at project end (project is closing in 7 weeks) and so far the NKBR is not created. However, as we discussed in Section 4.2.1 there is still a possibility that the NKBR would legally be created. This pending decision is critical for the long term potential to achieve the project objective that is to conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan and the region. Currently, the basis to achieve this objective exists. The project delivered most of the expected outputs:

- Prepared and submitted all basic documents for the establishment of the Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve;
- Prepared, in consultation with key stakeholders, a "pilot" management plan and review / agreement by all parties;
- Built public, local authority and rural community awareness, support and participation in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use;
- Built capacity of local authorities, key decision makers and rural communities to effectively plan and play a role in the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable utilization of natural resources;
- Demonstrated and tested new approaches to achieve sustainable natural resource use and thereby practical management models for reducing threats to biodiversity and generating revenue for management;
- Evaluated and disseminated lessons learned by the project to national and regional interested parties and stakeholders.

149. What were not delivered by the project were mainly two outputs:

- Creation of a functioning administration unit for the administration of the Biosphere Reserve fully capable of implementing the management plan;
- Development of long term management plan based on detailed evaluation of the "pilot" management plan and in depth discussion with key stakeholders;

150. Considering these project deliverables, there is a strong potential for achieving the long term goal. However if the NKBR will not be created, most of these deliverables may be lost over time. The impact of the project will reside mostly with the Stakeholders who were engaged in the project during its implementation and who acquired skills and knowledge in the area of biodiversity conservation and protected area management through project training seminars, information dissemination and on-the-job coaching (team work). The demonstrations of new approaches and management models would not be disseminated throughout the biosphere reserve due to a lack of a proper enabling environment (no administration to manage the NKBR) and, furthermore, may be lost over time due to a lack of ownership by key agencies such as the Forestry Department and/or the SCNP.

151. If the NKBR is created in the near future, the potential impact of the project to achieve its long term objective is good. The legal establishment of the biosphere reserve would re-energized the Stakeholders to make it a reality and the pending NKBR management plan, best practices, and management models would be "awakened" and would be put into practice throughout the NKBR and potentially in other protected areas in the country. Additionally, the signal from the GOU would be clear for the future of the protected area system in Uzbekistan, whereby the biosphere concept would be now fully accepted and has an enabling environment to be

implemented in Uzbekistan.

4.4.2. Potential to Achieve Global Environmental Benefits

152. No matter what is the output of the process of establishing the NKBR, the GEF contribution to global environmental benefits does exist on this project and it is rated as satisfactory. It was the first project of this type in Uzbekistan and - in parallel to its implementation - it contributed to a dialogue on the Uzbek protected area system which needs to be reorganized and expanded (first priority of the 1998 NBSAP). The protected area system of Uzbekistan consists of nine State Reserves (Zapovedniks, IUCN Cat. I); two national parks (IUCN Cat. II); one Biosphere Reserve (IUCN Cat. IX); fourteen Special State Reserves (Zakazniks, IUCN Cat. IV); two State Natural Memorials (IUCN Cat. IV); and, one captive breeding centre (IUCN Cat. III). The total protected areas is about 25,813 km² (5.75% of the country) but only 1.8% (8,068 km² of IUCN category I and II) is strictly protected¹².

153. The system of protected nature areas in Uzbekistan has limits: its total size, representation, conceptual approaches, financing, legislative base and management. Attempts to create a scientifically-based system of protected nature areas have been undertaken several times since the late 1980s. However, for various reasons, none of them were realized. The framework of WWF's Central Asia programme focussed on these aspects in the region - including Uzbekistan - since 2003 and the vision is to protect about 10% of the country in the long term. The establishment of the NKBR was mentioned by the WWF framework for Uzbekistan as one priority strategy to expand the protected area system.

154. The activities to prepare and submit all basic documents for the establishment of the Nuratau-Kyzyilkum Biosphere Reserve - including the zoning plan, the boundary and demarcation, the detailed assessment to identify the legal/administrative instruments required to meet the objectives of the NKBR and the drafting of the legal/administrative documents – provided good on-the-job training opportunities for the engaged Stakeholders at both the national and local levels. As it is reviewed in Section 4.2.3, the capacity of people involved in the project was developed and the concept of a biosphere reserve is now well understood in the area but also in national institutions such as the Forestry Department and the SCNP and their respective agencies.

155. These new skills and knowledge were already used in several cases such as the design and implementation of the “*Conservation of “Tugai” Forest and Strengthening Protected Areas System in the Amu Darya Delta of Karakalpakstan*” project funded by UNDP-GEF and the design of the “*Enhancement of national strict nature reserves effectiveness by demonstrating new conservation management approaches in Surkhan Strict Nature Reserve*” proposal to be submitted for funding to UNDP-GEF and the Ministry of Agriculture.

156. At the local level, the Land Users, Farmers, and other Stakeholders benefited greatly from the project. They now have a better understanding of the local biodiversity and the need to conserve it but also of the possibility to use the local natural resources in a sustainable way. This impact is currently limited to the local communities where the project intervened. However, once the NKBR is created, this impact should be expanded to all communities in the NKBR area.

4.4.3. Potential Impacts on Local Environment, Welfare and Other Socio-Economic Issues

157. The project has the potential to impact positively on the local environment and the socio-economic aspects; including the welfare of low income population. However, for this potential to become a reality, the NKBR needs to be established (*see Section 4.4.1*). Currently, the sub-projects had an impact on the local environment and socio-economic issues. These sub-projects demonstrated that it is possible to preserve the environment and to improve the local livelihood by using the natural resources sustainably. However these impacts are small considering the size of the NKBR area; it impacted only the Stakeholders who were engaged in these demonstration projects. In order to maximize the impacts of these achievements, it is necessary that the NKBR be created and that the Administration of the biosphere reserve takes these results and implement them

¹² ECONET, “Web for Life”, Central Asia, WWF-Russia, 2006 and UNDP-GEF MSP “Enhancement of national strict nature reserves effectiveness by demonstrating new conservation management approaches in Surkhan Strict Nature Reserve”

further throughout the biosphere reserve area.

158. For instance, the community forestry sub-project demonstrated the demand for fruit-trees in these communities to regain mountain land which used to be cultivated by the farmers' ancestors. The result is an increase of production for the farmers who will start selling their new production of fruits in a few years and/or will use the wood for household energy needs; and at the same time the protection of this land against further erosion and the protection of habitats for wildlife such as birds.

159. In conclusion, despite an effective (satisfactory) implementation of the project, the potential impact to achieve its long term goal and objective is mixed; it is rated as marginally satisfactory. This potential impact does exist; however, the risk that the NKBR will not be created also exists and prevents the Evaluators to ascertain that there is a good potential impact in the long term to achieve the project goal and objective. If the NKBR will not be created, most of these deliverables may be lost over time. The impact of the project will reside mostly with the Stakeholders who were engaged in the project during its implementation and who acquired skills and knowledge in the area of biodiversity conservation and protected area management. However, if the NKBR is created, the potential impact of the project to achieve its long term objective is good. The legal establishment of the BR would re-energized the Stakeholders to make it a reality and the pending NKBR management plan, best practices, and management models would be "awakened" and would be put into practice throughout the NKBR and potentially in other protected areas in the country. Nevertheless, the GEF contribution to global environmental benefits does exist on this project. It contributed to a dialogue on the Uzbek protected area system which needs to be reorganized and expanded (first priority of the 1998 NBSAP).

4.5. Sustainability and Replicability

4.5.1. Sustainability of Results Achieved by the Project

160. Considering the current status of the establishment of the NKBR, the sustainability of the project achievements is rated as marginally satisfactory. However, this particular rating depends greatly on the outcome of the establishment of the NKBR. As already analyzed in other sections of this report, the central indicator to dictate the long term sustainability of the project achievements is the legal establishment of the NKBR. If the biosphere reserve is not created – it means a very limited sustainability of the critical project achievements; and if the biosphere reserve is created – it means an excellent sustainability of the critical project achievements.

Since my arrival, I am constantly asked for a project time extension. Despite good will and efforts (letters, meetings, etc.) the creation of the biosphere reserve hasn't happened yet.

There are two risks:

1. What was done (investment) may go to nothing (lost);
2. If the NKBR is not created, it may be difficult to expand the GEF portfolio in Uzbekistan

UNDP Resident Representative

161. One element preventing the creation of the NKBR and cited a few times during this terminal evaluation was that the creation of the NKBR was not a top priority and may be part of the "things to do when we have time", focusing for the time being on national issues such as water resource management (access and salinization) which is a key area for agricultural productivity and production (60-70% of Uzbek work in the agricultural sector).

162. From a timing point of view, an earlier legal establishment of the biosphere reserve would have been better to give time to the project to support the development of the required capacities for the new Administration of the NKBR to manage the reserve. However, if the NKBR is created in the near future, the project achievements will still have a greater sustainability than without the creation of the NKBR. It is to be noted that the amendment of the Law on Protected Natural Areas – which was done with the support of the project - is sustainable. This Law was passed by the GOU and it is now the Law which legislates the protected area in Uzbekistan.

163. It can be said that the establishment of the NKBR is the "last piece of the puzzle" to make it a reality. As soon as the NKBR is created, the major project achievements would become central to the creation of the reserve and its Administration. The package sent to the Cabinet of Ministers – which includes the zoning plan with boundaries and demarcation, a draft charter for the NKBR and a draft decree (all supported by the project) – the draft management plan for the Administration to manage the NKBR and the various models and management

plans such as eco-tourism development and livestock/rangeland management would become the main elements for the creation of the reserve, the constitution of the Administration and the management of the reserve.

164. As presented in Section 4.2.1, it is difficult to read the “crystal ball”. The possibility for a legal establishment in the next few weeks still exists; it was confirmed by all relevant interviewees. However, this matter may also take a longer time to be finalized for reason we do not know. Considering also that there seem to be no obvious opposition to the legal establishment of the NKBR and that the process of creating the reserve is well advanced in the local communities in the area, the option of “No NKBR” does not seem to be possible at this point or at least a political decision which may not go without impact; most residents of the area met during this evaluation consider themselves living in the NKBR.

165. As for the sub-project achievements, their long term sustainability is good. The capacity of the recipients was developed and what were accomplished should be sustained dynamically in the long run. It is the case for the tree plantations to regain some mountain arid land; the (5) strengthened veterinary stations; the guesthouses; the Youth Centre in the village of Birlashgan; the association of Rangeland Users; the NGO in the town of Yangikishlok; the installed water pumps and the business of manufacturing these pumps; and the information which was made available in the form of booklets/pamphlets including in schools in the area. People will use the skills and knowledge acquired with the project support and will continue with their day-to-day activities using the achievements as a basis to expand their production such as new plantations or better livestock management. However, despite that these local achievements should be sustainable, they are localized and their replicability to other parts of the reserve and elsewhere is limited until the NKBR and its Administration is created.

166. The case of the biosphere reserve information centre renovated/constructed in Yangikishlok may not be sustainable if the NKBR is not created before the project end. The project is currently discussing this issue with a few potential partners to - at least - keep it open in low-cost mode until the NKBR is created.

4.5.2. Sustainability Strategy and Project Exit Strategy

167. The sustainable strategy / project exit strategy developed in the project document is rated as satisfactory. The overall logic was a step approach with:

- Year one and two to provide the technical inputs required to establish an effective legal and administrative framework for the NKBR and baseline data required to develop effective management planning;
- Year two and three to provide extensive education and awareness activities to build capacity of the NKBR administration, the relevant local authorities and the general public to effectively administer and manage the NKBR. Also to develop a “pilot” management plan in a fully participatory manner which will further build capacity through “on the job” experience and provide a “road map” for the future of the NKBR.
- During the final stage, the project will provide a finalized adaptive management plan, based on experience gained by all stakeholders for the long term management of the NKBR. Also during this period, new approaches to natural resource use and rural livelihoods will be tested and, if successful, integrated into the final management plan.

168. It was anticipated that by the end of the project, there will be: “*an established and tested legal framework; an established and practically experienced administrative structure (including a NKBR Management Board and Administrative office); a long term management plan based on practical experience and full stakeholder participation/consultation; established financing mechanisms, including both central government budget, local budget allocations and self generated financing*”. On this basis, the NKBR was envisioned to be sustainable at project end and the UNDP-GEF direct assistance could cease.

169. Replaced in the context of the design stage, this strategy was adequate and logical. However, as reviewed in Section 4.2.4, the risk of the NKBR not being legally established during the lifetime of the project somehow was not a possibility at the start of the project. However it became a reality only in 2005. It was only after the mid-point of the lifetime of the project that this risk became critical to the success of the project. Somehow the project exit strategy did not seem to take into account this specific risk and no alternative plan was part of the project document. In retrospect, a major assumption that the government would legalize (quickly) the creation of

the NKBR was made at the project design stage without measures to mitigate the risk.

4.5.3. Financial and Human Resources Sustainability

170. The financial and human resources sustainability of the project is strongly linked to the overall sustainability of the project achievements and particularly linked to the creation of the NKBR. At this point, there is not really a question of financial and human resources sustainability. The project staff will have their contract terminated at the end of the project as planned and no other human resources issues exist. Financially, most of the activities conducted so far should be sustained by themselves and no recurrent costs exist; except the cost of renting the NKBR information centre in Yangikishlok. This is the only “project item” which may not be sustainable after the project end. Currently the cost of running this information centre is supported by the project; no decision has been made yet as to what will happen to this information centre. Discussions are taking place with the local authorities to keep it running on a low cost basis; hoping that the reserve will be created soon.

171. As for the sub-project achievements, as seen in Section 4.5.1, there are no sustainability issues including financial and human resources. Most of these achievements are “owned” by the local recipient and no recurrent costs to be supported by an external organisation exist.

172. In the case of a GOU decision to create the NKBR in the near future, the budget and staff to fund the Administration of the reserve is, according to interviewees, available. Since 2006, the Evaluators were told that a budget is available at the Ministry of Finance for the NKBR and that this information is known by the Cabinet of Ministers (decision-makers for the NKBR).

4.5.4. Enabling Environment – Policy, Legislation and Institutions

173. Before being able to create the NKBR and implement its concept, the project had to address an unforeseen issue within the existing legal framework at the start of the project. In order to create a NKBR (with its related attributes in line with the UNESCO-MAB network of BR) which included the Nuratau Zapovednik, the Law on protected areas needed to be amended. The project supported - as a priority - the process to amend this Law which was officially amended in December 2004 (*see Section 4.1.7 and 4.2.3*).

174. In anticipation of the establishment of the NKBR, the project also conducted numerous training seminars on the biosphere reserve concept, its management and the conservation and sustainable use of the local biodiversity. Some basic skills and knowledge were developed among the people involved in the management of this area. However as the NKBR is not created yet, this capacity would not be sufficient in the situation where the GOU finally creates the NKBR.

175. Considering the status of the project, which is pending for the official establishment of the NKBR, the current legal and policy frameworks are adequate for the creation of the reserve. However, an assessment of the current institutional capacity of the mandated organisation to carry out the new mandate of managing the NKBR will be needed once the decision to know which institution is made responsible for the NKBR (the proposal is to be the SCNP) will be made by the Cabinet of Ministers. This is a critical issue for the long term sustainability of the project achievements; however, the decision to create the NKBR does not lie with the project but with the GOU.

176. Despite an adequate enabling environment for the establishment of the NKBR, this environment will not be conducive once the biosphere reserve will be created. There will be few areas where more adapted Laws, policies and institutions will be needed to implement some of the findings from the project. For instance, the livestock and rangeland management sub-project was able to demonstrate new approaches to increase the productivity of livestock and to manage sustainably the local rangeland. However for these new approaches to be implemented, it will necessitate some changes of the legal and policy frameworks on the basis of the management plan elaborated with the support of the project.

177. Finally, the new approaches demonstrated by the project could impact the national system of protected areas. However, the current system and in particular the institutional set-up is not very conducive for a good management of the protected areas. Several organisations are involved in the management of protected areas and

as long as this issue is not addressed, it will hamper the efforts made to improve the protected area system in Uzbekistan.

4.5.5. Ecological Sustainability

178. The ecological sustainability of the project is rated as highly satisfactory as there are no environmental risks which can undermine the future flow of project environmental benefits. No project activities pose a threat to the environment and to the sustainability of the project achievements. On the contrary, most of the activities should contribute to improving the ecological sustainability in the NKBR area. The establishment of the NKBR would give a framework to better manage the environment and conserve the biodiversity in the NKBR area. The sub-project achievements have (and will have in the future) a positive impact on the environment through ecological awareness raising; plantation to regain mountain arid land and expand habitats for some bird species; and, improvement of the livestock and the associated rangeland management.

4.5.6. Replication and Scaling-Up

179. The review indicates that the replication and scaling-up of the project achievements are good; They are rated as satisfactory. The BR concept was brought to Uzbekistan by the project and is now a concept (3 management zones) that the government wants to replicate in other protected areas in the country. Through the amendment of the Law on Protected Natural Areas (which the project contributed to), the BR concept was, therefore, mainstreamed into the national framework for the management of the protected areas in Uzbekistan. This approach will be replicated in other protected areas in the country.

180. The project concept, lessons learned and best practices were already used in the design and implementation of the “*Conservation of the “Tugai” Forest and the Strengthening of the Protected Areas System in the Amu Darya Delta of Karakalpakstan*” project funded by UNDP-GEF. This project was designed a few years ago and started to be implemented in 2005. Its objective is to strengthen the Karakalpakstan system of protected areas through the enhanced enabling environment and the establishment of a multi-zoned National Park or a biosphere reserve which demonstrates the collaborative conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Amu Darya Delta. By now, the decision was made that a BR should be created on a basis of the existing Baday-Taugay strict nature reserve.

181. The project concept and the lessons learned were used in the proposal soon-to-be-submitted to GEF for funding called the “*Enhancement of national strict nature reserves effectiveness by demonstrating new conservation management approaches in Surkhan Strict Nature Reserve*” project. This project was designed in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture. This project is to further strengthen Uzbekistan’s protected area system by developing successful, cost-effective, and replicable approaches towards effective management of strict nature reserves; given that these reserves represent the most numerous and important instrument of *in situ* biodiversity conservation in the country. The initial draft project document is built on the new Law on Protected Areas (2004) and includes several lessons learned and best practices from this project; particularly for consulting the residents of the area; for preparing a management plan for the buffer zone; for establishing a community-based conservation programme; and, for supporting the local population on efficient and cost-effective practices of resources utilization.

Other examples of replication are:

- UNDP-GEF MSP “*Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development in the Gissar Mountains of Tajikistan*” (Tajikistan) – The Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) of this project also participated in the development and is currently involved in implementation of the Gissar project. He transferred the lessons learnt during the work in Nuratau project to the project team of the Gissar project in Tajikistan.
- UNEP-GEF-WWF “*Development of the ECONET for Long-term Conservation of Biodiversity in the Central Asia Eco-regions*” (regional) – The project transferred a package of documents on justification of the NKBR establishment, its boundaries and zoning plan, their description as well as mapping materials. The project team actively participated in meetings of the ECONET project; sharing its experience and lessons learnt.

- UNDP-GEF FSP “*Integrated Conservation of Priority Globally Significant Migratory Bird Wetland Habitat*” (Kazakhstan) – The project transferred its experience to the colleagues in the Kazakhstan project.
- CCD-GTZ project: The project has transferred documents regarding lessons learnt and good practices in community forestry, including a land tenure contract form, manual on the joint management, etc. The project team also participated in the meetings of the GTZ project where it presented the results.
- UNDP-European Union (EU) project “*Enhancement of living standards in Karakalpakstan and Namangan*” - the project organized a study tour for local people from the Karakalpakstan and Namangan regions regarding sharing community forestry practices.
- UNDESA 1666 project “*Disaster risk reduction in the mountains affected by environmental degradation with local communities’ involvement (Nuratau ridge)*” – the project initiated and provided technical support to the implementation of this project. Forestry experience was extensively used.

182. Moreover, the experience and lessons learned by the NKBR project have been extensively used in design and preparation of other UNDP environmental projects in areas such as livestock management and community forestry.

183. However, despite a good replication and scaling-up, a larger potential is hampered by the delay in establishing legally the NKBR. Uzbekistan is on the path to reorganize and expand its protected area system; the establishment of the NKBR would be considered as a major step forward toward these objectives and would clear the way forward.

184. In conclusion, similar to the impact, the sustainability of the project achievements is questionable; it is rated as marginally satisfactory. The establishment or the non-establishment of the NKBR is translated into two long term sustainability scenario: If the biosphere reserve is not created – it means a very limited sustainability of the critical project achievements; and if the biosphere reserve is created – it means a good sustainability of the critical project achievements. However, the sub-project achievements at the local level are sustainable. The capacity of the recipients was developed and the achievements should be sustained dynamically in the long run. It is the case for the tree plantations to regain some mountain arid land; the (5) strengthened veterinary stations; the guesthouses; the Youth Centre in the village of Birlashgan; the association of Rangeland Users; the NGO in the town of Yangikishlok; the installed water pumps and the business of manufacturing these pumps; and the information which was made available in the form of booklets/pamphlets including in schools in the area. People will use the skills and knowledge acquired with the project support and will continue with their day-to-day activities using the achievements as a basis to expand their production sustainably such as new plantations or better livestock management. Additionally, despite a questionable sustainability, the replicability and scaling-up of the project is good. The project concept, lessons learned and best practices were already used in the design and implementation of several projects in Uzbekistan and in the region.

5. CONCLUSIONS / RATING SUMMARY

185. In conclusion, a summary of the ratings is given in the table below for each evaluation criteria.

Table 8: Ratings Summary

Evaluation Criterion	Summary Comments	Rating
Relevance	The project was highly relevant in meeting the objectives of the UNCBD, the UNDP and GEF, in responding to the development objectives of Uzbekistan and in meeting the needs of the target beneficiaries. Its design was satisfactory and the project document contains a convincing approach to address the existing problems. There was no other real design option at the time; though, based on what we now know, the timing and sequence of the design was too ambitious.	Highly Satisfactory
Effectiveness	The project was effective in achieving its expected outcomes. Despite the fact that the responsibility of creating the NKBR resides outside the project authority, the project was able to utilize its resources to achieve good results and contribute toward the objective of the project which was to conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural	Satisfactory

Evaluation Criterion	Summary Comments	Rating
	<p>assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan and the region.</p> <p>However, the project assumed that “those relevant government agencies and the Cabinet of Ministers / Parliament show adequate commitment to the timely approval and enactment of required legislation”. This assumption was not part of the most important project risks and it seems like the assumption of creating the NKBR was a “fait accompli”. It is only in 2005 that an additional risk was identified and categorized as political “the Government will not legally establish the Biosphere Reserve by the end of the project, which will not allow the project to logically complete all planned activities and reach envisaged objectives”.</p>	
Efficiency	<p>The project was well managed and the resources utilized efficiently. It used adaptive management extensively to secure project outcomes while maintaining adherence to the overall project design. The project management team used the log-frame as a guide to implement the project. The project finances were managed by the UNDP-Atlas system which was adequate. Despite some Staff turnover during the first few years of the project, the technical assistance team was well qualified to implement the project; was highly motivated toward goal achievement; use/develop the capacity of the national staff; and, developed excellent relationships with the project Stakeholders. The project delivery mechanisms were good with a PSC to oversee the progress of the project twice a year and a Tri-Partite Review (TPR) process to review the progress and implementation issues and make the necessary decisions. The implementation approach emphasized a strong participation of Stakeholders and most of the project achievements are owned by the relevant Stakeholders.</p> <p>However, the sub-contracting mechanism for the implementation of the sub-projects did not work-out as planned and the project management team had to deal with some time-consuming contractual issues. The country ownership has been hampered by the delay in establishing the biosphere reserve; due mostly to the project which had to step forward putting pressure on the relevant Ministries and Agencies to press on for the resolution of the issue instead of transferring responsibilities and further developing the capacity of the key agencies.</p>	Satisfactory
Impact	<p>Despite an effective implementation (satisfactory) of the project, the potential impact to achieve its long term goal and objective is mixed. This potential impact does exist; however, the risk that the NKBR will not be created also exists and prevents the Evaluators to ascertain that there is a good potential impact in the long term to achieve the project goal and objective. This rating is valid within the current context of the project that is pending for the legal establishment of the NKBR.</p> <p>If the NKBR will not be created, most of these deliverables may be lost over time. The impact of the project will reside mostly with the Stakeholders who were engaged in the project during its implementation and who acquired skills and knowledge in the area of biodiversity conservation and protected area management. The demonstrations of new approaches and management models would not be disseminated throughout the biosphere reserve due to a lack of a proper enabling environment (no administration to manage the NKBR) and, furthermore, may be lost over time due to a lack of ownership by key agencies such as the Forestry Department and/or the SCNP.</p> <p>However, if the NKBR is created in the near future, the potential impact of the project to achieve its long term objective is good. The legal establishment of the biosphere reserve would re-energized the Stakeholders to make it a reality and the pending NKBR management</p>	Marginally Satisfactory

Evaluation Criterion	Summary Comments	Rating
	<p>plan, best practices, and management models would be “awakened” and would be put into practice throughout the NKBR and potentially in other protected areas in the country. Additionally, the signal from the GOU would be clear for the future of the protected area system in Uzbekistan, whereby the biosphere concept would be now fully accepted and has an enabling environment to be implemented in Uzbekistan.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the GEF contribution to global environmental benefits does exist on this project. It was the first project of this type in Uzbekistan and it contributed to a dialogue on the Uzbek protected area system which needs to be reorganized and expanded (first priority of the 1998 NBSAP). The capacity of the people involved in the project was developed and the concept of a biosphere reserve is now well understood in the area but also in national institutions such as the Forestry Department and its agencies and the SCNP and its agencies. These skills and knowledge were already used in several cases to design new projects to strengthen the protected area system in Uzbekistan.</p>	
Sustainability	<p>Similar to the impact, the sustainability of the project achievements is questionable. The establishment or the non-establishment of the NKBR is translated into two long term sustainability scenario: If the biosphere reserve is not created – it means a very limited sustainability of the critical project achievements; and if the biosphere reserve is created – it means a good sustainability of the critical project achievements.</p> <p>In the scenario where the NKBR is created, the major project achievements would become central to the creation of the reserve and its administration. The package sent to the Cabinet of Ministers – which includes the zoning plan with boundaries and demarcation, a draft charter for the NKBR and a draft decree (all supported by the project) – the draft management plan for the Administration to manage the NKBR and the various models and management plans such as eco-tourism development and livestock/rangeland management would become the main elements for the creation of the reserve, the constitution of the Administration and the future management of the reserve.</p> <p>Despite that it is difficult to read the “crystal ball”, the possibility for a legal establishment in the next few weeks still exists; it was confirmed by all relevant interviewees. However, this matter may also take a longer time to be finalized for reason we do not know. Considering also that there seem to be no obvious opposition to the legal establishment of the NKBR and that the process of creating the reserve is well advanced in the local communities in the area, the option of “No NKBR” does not seem to be possible at this point or at least a political decision which may not go without impacts. Most residents of the area met during this evaluation consider themselves living in the NKBR.</p> <p>However, the sub-project achievements are sustainable. The capacity of the recipients was developed and the achievements should be sustained dynamically in the long run. It is the case for the tree plantations to regain some mountain arid land; the (5) strengthened veterinary stations; the guesthouses; the Youth Centre in the village of Birlashgan; the association of Rangeland Users; the NGO in the town of Yangikishlok; the installed water pumps and the business of manufacturing these pumps; and the information which was made available in the form of booklets/pamphlets including in schools in the area. People will use the skills and knowledge acquired with the project support and will continue with their day-to-day activities using the achievements as a basis to expand their production such as new plantations or better livestock management.</p>	Marginally Satisfactory

Evaluation Criterion	Summary Comments	Rating
	Despite a questionable sustainability, the replicability and scaling-up of the project is good. The project concept, lessons learned and best practices were already used in the design and implementation of several projects in Uzbekistan and in the region.	
Specific Criterion (from TORs)		
Conceptualization/ Design	The project document approved by GEF and other parties contains a full justification and convincing approach to address the root causes and the principal threats in the NKBR area. The logic of the project strategy was well laid out in the project document; which also included an end of project situation, an exit strategy and three obligations from the parties (UNDP and GOU) to be fulfilled before the start of the project. The logical framework contained the logic of project intervention; including the expected outputs and the major activities to be implemented. It also included performance indicators which were used during the implementation of the project to measure progress. However, the risk management framework did not really include specifically the risk of the GOU not creating the NKBR; it was considered as an assumption. It is only in 2005 that an additional risk was identified and categorized as political "the Government will not legally establish the Biosphere Reserve by the end of the project, which will not allow the project to logically complete all planned activities and reach envisaged objectives".	Satisfactory
Stakeholders participation (in project formulation)	The participation of Stakeholders in project formulation was encouraged by the project team and the consultation process was recognized as a model and used for the formulation of other projects in Uzbekistan. The relevant national institutions were engaged during this design phase. However, the participation of the local communities in the formulation of the project was initiated gradually within the existing context whereby many obstacles existed in Uzbekistan to ensure full stakeholder involvement; including the highly centralized and authoritarian system of the past and an absence of almost any form of civil society structures.	Satisfactory
Implementation Approach	See Efficiency above	Satisfactory
Monitoring and Evaluation	The monitoring and progress reporting of the project was done according to UNDP and GEF procedures. Over time the UNDP progress reporting procedures changed and the project reported its progress according to the relevant format. The indicators measured well the actual progress made toward the achievements of the expected results. The progress of the project was also reported in the PIRs by measuring its contribution against the GEF strategic targets in biodiversity related to BD1: Protected Areas; BD2: Spatial, Sectoral, Market and Organization/Business Mainstreaming; and, BD4: Lessons Learning, Dissemination and Uptake. However, the project did not use the Tracking Tool for GEF Biodiversity Focal Area Strategic Priority One: Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems at National Levels. This tracking tool is to provide an assessment of protected area management effectiveness. It is derived from the World Bank/WWF Alliance for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Use Site-Level Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) for Protected Areas and from the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) framework.	Satisfactory
Stakeholder Participation (in project implementation)	Despite responding well to the needs of the target groups at both national and local levels and a good participation of Stakeholders during the design phase, the delay in creating the NKBR has impeded a greater sharing of the project responsibilities and a greater ownership of the project by the Stakeholders. During the first phase of the project to prepare the documents for the creation of the NKBR, the relevant institutions were much engaged in the process; including the national and regional institutions and the local authorities at both the Oblast and	Marginally Satisfactory

Evaluation Criterion	Summary Comments	Rating
	Rayon levels. The creation of the NKBR would have emphasized this ownership by becoming a reality and the need for these institutions to be engaged in the management of the new biosphere reserve. However, the approach used to implement the sub-projects emphasized the development of local capacities and was based on a strong participation of local Stakeholders. As a result, the achievements of these sub-projects are owned by the recipient Stakeholders and the long term sustainability of these achievements should be guaranteed.	
Attainment of Outcomes	See Effectiveness above.	Satisfactory
Achievement of Objective	See Impact above	Marginally Satisfactory
Overall Rating	Overall, the achievements of the project are satisfactory. It was the first UNDP-GEF project implemented outside of Tashkent in Uzbekistan and the project operated in a complex environment. The design was technically good but the timing and the sequence were ambitious. Replaced in the context of the design phase, no real other options were available. Starting the project after the creation of the NKBR was not really an option since the GOU needed some support to prepare the necessary documents to establish legally the NKBR. Moreover, despite this uncertainty around the creation of the biosphere reserve, the project contributed to the development of the capacity of many people and organizations involved in the management of protected areas. The project pioneered the consultation of Stakeholders, the preparation of all necessary steps to create a biosphere reserve such as zoning plan, draft decree for the creation of a biosphere reserve, management plan for the Administration to manage the newly created reserve and demonstrated best practices to achieve sustainable natural resource use to improve local livelihood; including management models to reduce the threats to local biodiversity. The biosphere reserve concept, the lessons learned and the best practices were already used in the design and implementation of several projects in Uzbekistan and in the region. Nevertheless, the creation of the NKBR would be a clear signal from the GOU for the future of the protected area system in Uzbekistan, whereby the biosphere concept would be now fully accepted and has an enabling environment to be implemented in Uzbekistan.	Satisfactory

6. LESSONS LEARNED

186. Based on the review of project documents, interviews with key informants, and analysis of the information collected, the evaluation team collaged the following lessons learned:

- The design of projects involving the achievement of critical milestones such as a new Law or a new institution should better take into account the time needed for the political process to go through. This process should also be fully part of the logic of the project intervention and allow the project to stop/pause until this achievement is met. Often the remaining part of the project will depend greatly of this critical milestone (new piece of legislation or new institution) and the decision to continue with the implementation of the project without waiting for this critical milestone is not a good project management practice searching for “good value for money”. The project may produce good outputs and outcomes but their long term impact and sustainability will almost always be questionable.
- This type of project requires a longer timeframe to achieve results. The time it takes to change a Law or a Policy is often underestimated and the overall project duration too short to develop the full necessary capacity to make the change sustainable. A project involving a change of the legislation and/or policy framework should not be shorter than 5 years.
- Considering the difficulties/barriers to work in an environment such as Central Asia, it is not efficient to sub-contract an external partner for small sub-projects; particularly for sub-projects with small

budgets. A limited scope and budget are not attractive enough to attract international NGOs with good project implementation track records.

- In a complex socio-economic-political context such as Uzbekistan, the design of projects should emphasize assessments (using instrument such as PDFs) focusing on policies, legislation and institutions - including capacity assessment of individuals and their institutions - and a thorough assumptions and risks assessment. It is only with a complete assessment that project of this type will succeed in the given timeframe and avoid surprises (such as the need to amend a Law) during the implementation.
- When using a Project Management Unit (PMU) to implement projects, the long term sustainability of project achievements is always riskier than when the project is implemented within a stronger partnership with one local institutions; sharing resources. The more mainstreamed the implementation of a project is within a recipient institution, the less risk that the achievements will not be sustainable; moreover, the earlier the project achievements are institutionalized the better the long term sustainability will be. A more integrated implementation approach emphasizes the development of capacity and maintains more ownership with the Stakeholders during the implementation phase. A greater ownership of project achievements by Stakeholders means also fewer transfers needed for these achievements to find a “home” at project end.
- Within the context of a project focusing on legislation and institution development, the implementation of sub-projects demonstrating and testing new approaches is vital for these projects. It provides good examples of sustainable use of the natural resources to improve the local livelihood; and also conserving the local biodiversity at the same time. It “connects” these projects with the end-users and feedbacks the legislation and institutional development process with the reality on the ground; helping the decision-making process.
- There is little emphasis on policy making/development and policy implementation in Uzbekistan. Ministries and agencies are more focus on legislation; passing new Laws. Legislative frameworks are the guiding principles for ministries and agencies’ programming. This could be explained by the fact that Uzbekistan is still in transition from a “command and control” system to more participatory and policy led processes. Nevertheless, this approach is time-consuming and resource intensive and prevents a more rapid response for agencies to adapt locally.
- The management of a biosphere reserve area which includes many rural communities and few small towns is a complex area to manage that is much more difficult to manage than a more traditional protected area; particularly the aspects related to land use and use of natural resources. The management approach needs to be much more participatory and be inclusive of all the population leaving in the area; particularly the land users.
- Accurate and relevant information and communication are important components of the management framework of a biosphere reserve. Good and accessible information is key for good decision-making but also to keep people abreast of new developments, to offer information on best practices, etc. A project such as the NKBR produced a lot of relevant and useful information which should be more accessible by all through the web. Despite that a small percentage of the population has access to the web today in Uzbekistan, it will change over the coming years and project of this type should emphasize the dissemination of this information through the web.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

187. Based on the findings of this terminal evaluation, the following recommendations are made:

Recommendations to End the Project

1. As part of building the political case for the establishment of the NKBR, the project should introduce the NKBR package to the committee on the environment existing under the Senate. This committee consists of Senators and a presentation to this committee should help the case to move forward and establish the NKBR.

2. Organize a meeting with the Prime Minister, the Chairman of SCNP, a Representative from the Cabinet of Ministers, UNDP and the Project Management Team to review the process of establishing the NKBR. The current Prime Minister was the Governor of Samarkand at the beginning of the project and became Prime Minister in 2004; he was one champion for the creation of the NKBR. As Governor (Khokim) of the Djizzakh oblast he signed the project document and then, as Governor of the Samarkand oblast he agreed on the selection of land for the zoning of the NKBR. This recommended meeting should be prepared in the context of the closure of the project, press on for the political process to be finalized and to obtain the latest status on the establishment of the NKBR which will be the final statement from a government perspective to be in the final project report.
3. Continue to support the Gosbiocontrol and SCNP to help any possible actions they would like to undertake to press on the political process of establishing the NKBR; by means of the SCNP Chairman as a Champion to defend the case.
4. The existing body of knowledge of the project is utilized mostly on an ad-hoc basis (on demand). The information is available at the project office and information was disseminated throughout the area and to relevant Stakeholders. However, this knowledge could be more utilized. Its access should be extended to all; using web technologies. The entire body of knowledge should be loaded onto the web and anybody should be able to access it. The numerous models, manuals, plans, assessments and other pieces of project information should be posted to a web site and be available to whoever wants to access it. In the meantime, considering that the project is ending in a few weeks, it should at least provide a copy of most of this knowledge to the main relevant organisations such as SCNP and the Forestry Department and their respective Agencies. Finally, this body of knowledge should be catalogued in the end of project report to leave a transparent paper trail available.
5. Under the project and sub-projects, few agreements were reviewed and changed such as the Land Users/Forestry Department agreements and the Credit Union/UNDP agreement. The project should conduct a full review of these agreements and document them all in the end of project report to leave a transparent paper trail after the project end.
6. In the case where the NKBR would be created (the most probable scenario), the GOU will need support to establish this new biosphere reserve (such as the new boundaries of each zone) and to develop the capacity of the new Administration to manage this new area. The early involvement of the local communities will be critical for the future of the NKBR; as well as a strong assessment of the area on the basis of what the project already supported. To facilitate long term planning, donors should support the GOU to produce a sustainable development profile of the area; focusing on the three pillars of sustainable development: social, economic and environment. This profile would gather all available information into one place and would provide most of the necessary data for planning, implementing and controlling activities in the area. Additionally, the new Administration would benefit from a review of best practices used in similar biosphere reserves worldwide; using the UNESCO-MAB network of biosphere reserves. Finally, on the basis of this sustainable development profile, some support should be provided to the GOU to conduct a comprehensive capacity development assessment. This assessment would be the basis for establishing the long term strategic development plan for the NKBR.
7. The livestock and rangeland management plan supported by the project needs to be published and “owned” by a local organisation. The project should discuss this matter with the main stakeholder (the Institute of Karakul Sheep Breeding and Ecology of Desert) and the Ministry of Agriculture to decide the course of action for this particular document. The minimum should be its publication which should be jointly by the project and the partners.

Recommendations for Designing other Projects

8. Any approval of new GEF funded biodiversity project should be tied with the conclusion of this project. In the situation where the NKBR will not be created before the end of the project, it is important to obtain the “official version” of the government for the future of the NKBR proposal. The current situation is not conducive for good relationships among donors and the GOU and the sooner a final status will be given to the NKBR proposal the better for the future of biodiversity projects in Uzbekistan.

9. Projects with a similar critical milestone which is not dependent on the project but on one partner should be designed carefully and be flexible enough to be implemented in two phases: one before the critical milestone is reached and one after the critical milestone is approved, created or met. This type of project needs to have a stopping/pausing point before going into the next phase of implementation. In effect it is to recommend that this type of project be designed as phases, independent of each other.
10. Conduct comprehensive assessments for the design of new projects, emphasize community/stakeholders participation and develop projects for a minimum duration of at least 5 years. In a complex socio-economic-political context such as Uzbekistan, project should be designed on comprehensive assessments (using instrument such as PDFs) focusing on policies, legislation and institutions - including capacity assessment of individuals and their institutions - and a thorough assumptions and risks assessment. Comprehensive assessments should avoid surprises (such as the need to amend a Law) during the implementation of these projects.
11. When designing new projects, particularly in the natural resource management area and the implementation of a global environmental agenda, emphasize a capacity development approach with some key features such as:
 - a. Build on existing programmes, structures & mechanisms: reinforce existing high level policy framework and reform underway, constantly scan and adapt projects to the local reality and build the “transmission belts” among institutions. Respond to explicit needs and not “constructed” needs; be sure the project is responding to clear existing needs;
 - b. Emphasize early engagement of Stakeholders and keep ownership with them: use participatory approaches, share decisions and build consensus. Focus on building trust among partners, leave space for dialogue and share resources through partnership agreements;
 - c. Work with champions but still support less engaged Stakeholders: work with “pockets of energy”; including political champions, foster networking, obtain high level government support and support the less engaged but important organisations;
 - d. Early Institutionalization = LT Sustainability: an early engagement of Stakeholders and an early institutionalization of processes ensure/guarantee the long term sustainability.
12. Streamline UNDP administrative procedures; particularly the line of authority to approve any payment of project expenditures. Considering the necessity to comply with the GOU and internal UNDP policies, the issue of payment through bank transfers will continue to exist until the banking system improves drastically in Uzbekistan. However, the efficiency of these payments should be improved and a careful use of cash payments in rural areas by projects should be accommodated.
13. The implementation of sub-projects should be executed by the projects themselves and should have a duration of a minimum of three (3) years. The budgets are too small to attract international NGOs with good project implementation track record. Contracting outside organisations for the implementation of sub-projects is time intensive, it requires a lot of administration and there is a limited control over their efficiency and effectiveness. The projects can access the required technical assistance; including international expertise if needed.
14. Support a greater involvement of the scientific community in this type of project; particularly with a focus on the impact of management practices on the biodiversity. The scientific community needs to be more involved in these projects and to focus particularly on the conservation methods and the sustainable use of the biodiversity; traditionally a weak area among the scientific community.

Recommendations for the “Tugai” and “Kugitang” Projects

15. The design of the two closely related UNDP-GEF projects with the NKBR project – the “*Conservation of “Tugai” Forest” and Strengthening Protected Areas System in the Amu Darya Delta of Karakalpakstan*” and the “*Enhancement of national strict nature reserves effectiveness by demonstrating new conservation management approaches in Surkhan Strict Nature Reserve (former Kugitang Mountains project)*” – needs to incorporate the critical lessons learned around the issue of the creation of the NKBR in relation with the overall performance of the NKBR project (i.e. the non-creation of the NKBR hampered the success of the project and jeopardize its long term sustainability).

The former project above is already being implemented. However, the review of the project document indicates a similar intervention logic. The project seems to have the same type of approach as the

NKBR project. The objective is to strengthen the PA system in Karakalpakstan by creating a multi-zoned national park (on the basis of the UNESCO-MAB principles). The project will improve the legal and regulatory frameworks and will demonstrate new management approaches for buffer zones. The risks comprised water resource availability, barriers to this new approach, recurrent financial support and unsuccessful demonstration. However, as for the NKBR project, the risk that this new National Park would not be created is not explicitly stated and no mitigation plan is provided. In other words, the situation is the same as the one for the NKBR and the project may end up with no national park created, jeopardizing the long term sustainability of the project achievements.

The latter project mentioned above, is still at the design stage. Its objective is to develop successful, cost-effective, and replicable approaches towards effective management of strict nature reserves by demonstrating it in the Surkhan Strict Nature Reserve. The overall approach is to focus on the existing reserves and their Administrations and transform the PA in a BR-like area with a core zone and buffer zones where people live. The good thing is that the project will build the capacity of the current Strict Reserves Administrations by working together. However the strengthening of the legislation and regulation frameworks, the zoning of the area and the development of a management plan for a multi-zoned area may end up in the same situation as the NKBR project.

It is recommended that in both cases this issue be reviewed as soon as possible by the respective management team, be monitored carefully, clarify these matters with the GOU and obtain a commitment from the GOU to fulfill their obligations on time.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

UZBEKISTAN Establishment of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve Project as a Model for Biodiversity Conservation in Uzbekistan (PIMS 1271 UNDP-GEF Medium Size Project)

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR FINAL EVALUATION

1. Introduction

1.1. UNDP-GEF Monitoring & Evaluation Policy

UNDP-GEF Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) policy is available on-line at:
<http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html>

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 (iv) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned.

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.

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.

1.2 The Establishment of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve Project

a. Objective and outcomes

The project aimed to develop and test an integrated and participatory approach to in-situ biodiversity conservation in Uzbekistan by integrating conservation and rural development objectives in order to achieve sustainable conservation and sustainable livelihood goals. The project planned establishing, under the umbrella of a zoned Biosphere Reserve, a “multiple use” protected area incorporating strictly protected core areas, buffer zones and “transition” areas in which the establishment of sustainable land-use regimes and local economic structures would be pursued.

By addressing initial barriers to the implementation of this new approach for Uzbekistan, the project would secure the conservation of biodiversity in the project area in the medium to long term. In addition, through use of the project area as a model, the project would contribute to the effectiveness of efforts to redevelop the rest of the national protected areas system.

The project territory comprises the Nuratau Mountain range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert that form an area of key national and global biodiversity value incorporating medium-sized mountains (maximum elevation of 2,169 meters), foothills, desert and wetland ecosystems. The project site is therefore representative of a large number of basic ecotypes in Uzbekistan and the Central Asia as a whole.

The project started its implementation with the following objective and the planned outcomes:

Objective: To conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan and the region

Outcome 1: The unique national and global biodiversity value and the mosaic of natural and cultural landscapes in the project area conserved

Outcome 2: Local authorities and communities have a better awareness and valuation of biodiversity resources and services and an understanding of the principles of sustainable development.

- Outcome 3: The capacity of local authorities and communities to play an active role in the planning and management of natural resources and development of sustainable livelihoods in place.
- Outcome 4: Types of land use reduced within the project area with negative effects on the ecosystems and the basis established for the long term sustainable development of the area in place
- Outcome 5: New “inclusive” and sustainable human development-oriented approaches to the conservation of biodiversity in Uzbekistan developed and tested

The project is implemented jointly by UNDP and the national counterparts. The national executing agency for the project is the Gosbiocontrol under the State Committee for Nature Protection (SCNP).

The originally planned duration of the project was 4.5 years, from March 30, 2001 till August 31 2005. However, the project was extended first until December 31, 2006 and then subsequently until June 31, 2007.

The initial cash budget of the project was 895,000 USD with 725,000 USD contributed from GEF, 150,000 USD – from UNDP Uzbekistan and 20,000 USD – from NABU, German conservation NGO. The Government also committed to contribute 480,000 USD in-kind.

b. Expected Project results

The project is expected to deliver on the entire set of the planned project outcomes. The complete package of documents necessary for establishment of the Nuratau-Kyzylkum biosphere reserve was submitted to the Government and the preliminary round of consultations between all involved ministries and agencies has passed. Prior to the submission, the project succeeded in introducing the concept of “biosphere reserve” into the national legislation, identified and agreed the allocation of boundaries and zones of the reserve, prepared the Management Plan for the future administration of the biosphere reserve (BR). The project however did not succeed to achieve one of the main outputs of the project – to establish the NKBR.

The level of awareness and understanding among local population and authorities on biodiversity values and principles of sustainable development increased substantively. This resulted in engagement of people and authorities in joint management of the resources. Specifically, the joint efforts showed its worth in forestry and livestock sectors.

Although the NKBR was not legally established, the concept of the NKBR, best practices and principles tested during the project found its application in a number of other projects both in Uzbekistan and in the Central Asia region.

The project has made efforts to build a solid foundation for conserving valuable biodiversity of the region and provided a number of models in managing the natural resources.

2. Objectives of the Final Evaluation

2.1. Who initiated the evaluation?

The Terminal evaluation is a requirement of UNDP-GEF and thus is principally initiated by the UNDP CO in Uzbekistan as part of their implementation responsibilities

2.2. Why is the evaluation being undertaken?

UNDP-GEF is primarily interested in analysis of how successful implementation of the project has been, what impacts it has generated, if the project benefits will be sustainable in the long-term and what the lessons learnt are for future interventions in the country, region and other parts of the globe where UNDP-GEF provides its assistance.

2.3. What will the evaluation try to accomplish?

This evaluation will provide professional assessment of the project implementation successfulness against the set objective and indicators, including contribution of the project to achieving global environmental benefits. The evaluation will also collate and analyze lessons learnt and best practices obtained during the period of the project implementation that can be further taken into consideration during development and implementation of other GEF projects in Uzbekistan and elsewhere in the world.

2.4. Who are the main stakeholders of the evaluation?

The report of the Terminal Evaluation will be disseminated for review to the executing and implementing

agencies, national stakeholders and other partners of the project and after finalization will be forwarded to UNDP-GEF coordination offices and ultimately to GEF Evaluation office for capitalizing the gained experience and feeding it in formulation of the GEF policies and decision making. The complete list of stakeholders includes:

National:

1. The State Committee for Nature Protection
2. The Gosbiocontrol
3. The Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, the Main Forestry Department
4. The Department of the National Parks, Strict Nature and Game Reserves
5. The Cabinet of Ministers
6. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
7. The Ministry of Finance
8. The Ministry of Economy
9. The Academy of Science
10. GEF Operational Focal Point
11. UNDP Country Office
12. DED office in Tashkent

International:

13. NABU
14. UNDP Country Offices in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan
15. Regional UNDP-GEF office in Bratislava

The final evaluation report will also be available for wide public at www.undp.uz and www.gef.uz

2.5. What is the purpose of this evaluation?

Specifically the present terminal evaluation has the following objectives:

- (i) to analyze and evaluate effectiveness of the results and impacts that the project has been able to achieve against the objective, targets and indicators stated in the project document;
- (ii) to assess effectiveness of the work and processes undertaken by the project as well as the performance of all the partners involved in the project implementation;
- (iii) to provide feedback and recommendations for subsequent decision making and necessary steps that need to be taken by the national stakeholders in order to ensure sustainability of the project's outcomes/results;
- (iv) to reflect on effectiveness of the available resource use; and
- (v) to document and provide feedback on lessons learned and best practices generated by the project during its implementation.

3. Products Expected from the Terminal Evaluation

The final product of the evaluation will be the Terminal Evaluation Report.

3.1 Indicative Outline of the Terminal report:

The evaluation report outline should be structured along the following lines with possible deviations agreed among the evaluation mission and the implementing parties of the project:

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Brief description of the project
- 1.2. Context and purpose of the evaluation
- 1.3. Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Purpose of the evaluation
- 2.2. Key issues addressed
- 2.3. Methodology of the evaluation

2.4. Structure of the evaluation

3. The project(s) and its development context

- 3.1. Project start and its duration
- 3.2. Problems that the project seeks to address
- 3.3. Goal, Objective and outcomes of the project
- 3.4. Main stakeholders
- 3.5. Results expected

4. Findings and Conclusions

- 4.1. Project formulation
- 4.2. Project Implementation
- 4.3. Project Results

5. Recommendations

6. Lessons learned

7. Annexes

- 7.1. Itinerary
- 7.2. List of persons interviewed
- 7.3. Summary of filed visits
- 7.4. List of documents reviewed
- 7.5. Questionnaire used and summary of results
- 7.6. Comments by stakeholders

More detailed break down of the evaluation report into sections and ratings is given in [Annex 1](#).

3.2. Additional notes on the Terminal report

Formatting:	Times New Roman – Font 11; single spacing; paragraph numbering and table of contents (automatic); page numbers (centred); graphs and tables and photographs (where relevant) are encouraged.
Length:	maximum 60 pages in total excluding annexes
Timeframe of submission:	first draft by the end of the mission and the final report within 10 days after completion of the country mission
Should be submitted to:	UNDP Country Office- Uzbekistan
Should be circulated for comments to:	all key stakeholders and participants of the project including governmental agencies involved in the project implementation, UNDP country office, project team and other partners.

If there are discrepancies between the impressions and findings of the evaluation team and the aforementioned parties these should be explained in an annex attached to the final report.

4. Methodology or Evaluation Approach

An outline of the evaluation approach is provided below. However, it should be made clear that the evaluation team is responsible for revising the approach as necessary. Any changes should be in line with international criteria and professional norms and standards as adopted by the UN Evaluation Group¹³). They must also be cleared by UNDP before being applied by the evaluation team. The evaluation should provide as much gender disaggregated data as possible.

The evaluation will be carried out by the team through:

- (i) **Documentation review** (desk study): the list of documentation is included in [Annex 2](#). All the documents will be provided in advance by the Project Implementation Unit and by the UNDP CO; The evaluator should consult all relevant sources of information, including but not limited to the following list of documentation: the project document, project reports, PSC minutes and decisions, project budgets,

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project work plans, progress reports, PIRs, project files, UNDP guiding documents, national legislation relevant to the project and any other material that they may consider useful

- (ii) **Interviews** will be held with the following organizations and persons as a minimum:
- UNDP CO – Uzbekistan: Resident Representative; Deputy Resident Representative; Energy and Environment Unit;
 - UNDP-GEF: Regional Technical Advisor for Biodiversity
 - National Project Coordinator
 - The State Committee for Nature Protection
 - The Head of Department of National Parks, strict nature and game reserves
 - Ministry of Finance
 - Project team: Project Manager, Chief Technical Adviser, Technical Adviser, component/team leaders
 - Project Steering Committee Members
- (iii) **Field Visits** should be made to all project sites.
- (iv) **Semi-structured interviews** – the team should develop a process for semi-structured interviews to ensure that different aspects are covered. Focus group discussions with project beneficiaries will be held as deemed necessary by the evaluation team. Interviews with the communities/households involved in forestry, livestock and eco-tourism components of the project are necessary. Interviews with communities' members who are not directly involved in the project activities and from the surrounding settlements are welcomed.
- (v) **Questionnaires** – any questionnaires that will help to better reflect the impacts of the project are welcomed and encouraged.

Although the evaluator should feel free to discuss with the authorities concerned all matters relevant to his/her assignment, they are not authorized to make any commitment on behalf of UNDP or GEF or the project management.

5. COMPOSITION OF THE EVALUATION MISSION

The equivalent of one international evaluator and one national evaluator has been budgeted for this evaluation team.

The team is required to combine international calibre evaluation expertise, the latest thinking in protected area management and sustainable-use, and knowledge of the regional context. The consultant will be hired by UNDP, following the UNDP rules and procedures.

Team Qualities:

- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies
- Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios
- Recent knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resource management projects
- Recognized expertise in the management and sustainable use of natural resources in Europe and Central Asia is an asset
- Familiarity with protected area policies and management structures in Central Asia is an asset
- Demonstrable analytical skills
- Experience with multilateral or bilateral supported conservation projects
- At least one team member able to speak Russian or Uzbek fluently and possess sufficient Uzbek reading and writing skills to be able to develop and interpret a user survey in Russian/Uzbek
- At least one team members with excellent English communication skills (oral, aural, written and presentation).

The consultants will be responsible for preparing the terminal evaluation report and its completion in accordance with UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation guidelines.

Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for a position. Applications are welcome from anyone who feels they can contribute to the team because they possess three or more of the listed qualities. Obviously the more qualities that can be demonstrated, the better the chance of selection.

Joint proposals from two independent evaluators are welcome. The evaluation will be undertaken in-line with GEF principles¹⁴:

- Independence
- Impartiality
- Transparency
- Disclosure
- Ethical
- Partnership
- Competencies and Capacities
- Credibility
- Utility

The evaluators must be independent from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of assistance. Therefore applications will not be considered from evaluators who have had any direct involvement with the design or implementation of the project. This may apply equally to evaluators who are associated with organizations, universities or entities that are, or have been, involved in the project. Any previous association with the project, the Ministry of Environment, UNDP-Uzbekistan or other partners/stakeholders must be disclosed in the application. This applies equally to firms submitting proposals as it does to individual evaluators.

If selected, failure to make the above disclosures will be considered just grounds for immediate contract termination, without recompense. In such circumstances, all notes, reports and other documentation produced by the evaluator will be retained by UNDP.

If individual evaluators are selected, UNDP - Uzbekistan will appoint one Team Leader. The Team Leader will have overall responsibility for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products. Team roles and responsibilities will be reflected in the individual contracts. If a proposal is accepted from a consulting firm, the firm will be held responsible for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products and therefore has responsibility for team management arrangements.

6. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

6.1. Management arrangements

UNDP Country Office – Uzbekistan will serve as the main operational point for the evaluation. It will be responsible for liaising with the project team to set up the stakeholder interviews, for coordinating with the Government on various aspects of evaluation, for hiring of national consultants if found necessary and ensuring timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. These Terms of Reference follow the UNDP-GEF policies and procedures, and together with the final agenda will be agreed upon by the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit, UNDP Country Office and the Government. These three parties will receive a draft of the final evaluation report and provide comments on it prior to its completion.

The project team will be responsible for logistical arrangements of the field visits.

Although the final report must be cleared and accepted by UNDP before being made public, the UNDP Evaluation Policy is clear the evaluation function should be structurally independent from operational management and decision-making functions in the organization. The evaluation team will be free from undue influence and has full authority to submit reports directly to appropriate levels of decision-making. UNDP management will not impose restrictions on the scope, content, comments and recommendations of evaluation reports. In the case of unresolved difference of opinions between any of the parties, UNDP may request the evaluation team to set out the differences in an annex to the final report.

6.2. Timeframe, resources, logistical support and deadlines

¹⁴ See p.16 of the GEF's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy

The total duration of the evaluation will be 26 days according to the following plan:

Preparation before field work: (3 days):

- Acquaintance with the project document and other relevant materials with information about the project (PIRs, Project Steering Committee reports, Mid term Evaluation report, etc);
- Familiarization with overall development situation of Uzbekistan (based on reading of CCA and other agency reports on the country).
- Detailed mission programme preparation in cooperation with the UNDP Country office and the Project team.
- Initial telephone discussion with UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor for Biodiversity For Europe and CIS

Field mission:

Tashkent (3 days)

- Meeting with UNDP Country office team;
- Visit to the office of the Executing Agency and briefing with the project management and technical staff;
- Meetings with other relevant national GoU partners and stakeholders in Tashkent;
- Interviews with subcontractor representatives if available;
- Joint review of all available materials with focused attention to project outcomes and outputs

Project site – Farish Rayon (7 days)

- Observation and review of completed and ongoing 15 field activities (management planning, capacity development, awareness /education, sustainable use demonstration activities, community development, etc)
- Interviews with key beneficiaries and stakeholders, including representatives of local authorities, local environmental protection authorities, local community stakeholders, etc.

Tashkent (3 days):

- Final interviews / cross checking with UNDP CO, Executing agency and Project staff.
- Drafting of report in proposed format
- Presenting and discussion of the draft report outline with UNDP CO and Project to agree on the format and emphasis.

After the field mission – home office (10 days)

- Telephone review of major findings with UNDP CO and UNDP-GEF Regional Biodiversity Coordinator
- Completing of the draft report and presentation of draft report for comments and suggestions
- Presentation of final evaluation report

Note: The attention is drawn to the fact that the number of days mentioned above is used for the purpose of planning the workload within the Special Service Agreement (SSA) duration period. The SSA signed between the parties, and to which the present TOR is an integral part of, stipulates payment and other conditions of the agreement between the parties.

7. Scope of the Evaluation – Specific Issues To Be Addressed

The Final Evaluation will assess the following aspects:

Relevance of the project to:

- a) Conservation of globally and nationally significant biodiversity;
- b) Development priorities at the local and national level;
- c) Direct beneficiaries - Government, local authorities, public services, utilities, residents;
- d) UNDP mission to promote SHD by assisting the country to build its capacities in the focal area of environmental protection and management.

Technical Performance - assess the technical progress that has been made by the project relative to the

15 Ongoing activities include those under the Community development “daughter” project and activities for which funds were leveraged by the project but which are carried out by others.

achievement of its immediate objective, outcomes and outputs.

- a) Quality of technical inputs – have the technical inputs (national and international) been both sound and pragmatic in the context of the countries development circumstances and field conditions found;
- b) Effectiveness - extent to which the objective have been achieved and how likely its is to be achieved;
- c) Efficiency – the extent to which the results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible (cost-effectiveness).
- d) Adaptability – has the project been adaptable in the face of technical challenges or changing circumstances.

Management Performance focused on project implementation

- a) General implementation and management - assess the project in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs and activities, with particular reference to financial and human resources management ;
- b) Executing agency, Project, and UNDP CO – assess the relative roles, capacities and effectiveness of the key project management players, with particular regard to UNDP CO obligations derived from the IA Fee.

Overall success of the project with regard to the following criteria:

- a) Results – the positive and negative and the foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects produced by the GEF intervention. This includes direct project outputs, outcomes, objective and longer term impact including the global environmental benefits, replication effects, etc.
- b) Sustainability - assessment of the prospects for potential replication of the project positive results after termination of UNDP support; static sustainability which refers to the continuous flow of the same benefits to the same target groups; dynamic sustainability use and/or adaptation of the projects’ results by original target groups and/or other target groups; the sustainability should be assessed in terms of ecological, social, institutional and financial sustainability;
- c) Contribution to capacity development - extent to which the project has empowered target groups and have made possible for the government and local institutions to use the positive experiences; ownership of projects’ results;
- d) Leveraging – any additional relevant financial or technical support to the project area.

Synergy with other similar projects, funded by the government or other donors.

Recommendations, lessons learned and best practices accumulated during the project for achieving sustainability of the project objective, impacts and mechanisms, including future support of project initiated interventions by the Government and other stakeholders. The evaluation should also reflect on the following aspects:

- Any key limitations in the original project proposal / project document;
- Any key lessons (positive and negative) in terms of both the technical and administrative implementation of the project;
- Any key factors in terms of the development environment that impacted the project;
- Any key lessons in terms of the quality of support provided by UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency;
- The major implications of any of the above for current or future GEF projects generally, and specifically those in the country / sub-region in which UNDP is acting as GEF IA;
- Specific recommendations on any or all of the above.

Annex 1. Preliminary content of the terminal evaluation report

1. Executive summary

- Brief description of project
- Context and purpose of the evaluation
- Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

2. Introduction

- Purpose of the evaluation
- Key issues addressed
- Methodology of the evaluation
- Structure of the evaluation

3. The project(s) and its development context

- Project start and its duration
- Problems that the project seek to address
- Immediate and development objectives of the project
- Main stakeholders
- Results expected

4. Findings and Conclusions

In addition to a descriptive assessment, all criteria marked with (R) should be rated using the following divisions: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory

4.1. Project Formulation

- Conceptualization/Design (R). This should assess the approach used in design and an appreciation of the appropriateness of problem conceptualization and whether the selected intervention strategy addressed the root causes and principal threats in the project area. It should also include an assessment of the logical framework and whether the different project components and activities proposed to achieve the objective were appropriate, viable and responded to contextual institutional, legal and regulatory settings of the project. It should also assess the indicators defined for guiding implementation and measurement of achievement and whether lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) were incorporated into project design.
- Country-ownership/Driveness. Assess the extent to which the project idea/conceptualization had its origin within national, sectoral and development plans and focuses on national environment and development interests.
- Stakeholder participation (R) Assess information dissemination, consultation, and “stakeholder” participation in design stages.
- Replication approach. Determine the ways in which lessons and experiences coming out of the project were/are to be replicated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects (this also related to actual practices undertaken during implementation).
- Other aspects to assess in the review of Project formulation approaches would be UNDP comparative advantage as IA for this project; the consideration of linkages between projects and other interventions within the sector and the definition of clear and appropriate management arrangements at the design stage.

4.2. Project Implementation

- Implementation Approach (R). This should include assessments of the following aspects:
 - i. The use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to this as a response to changing conditions and/or feedback from M and E activities if required.
 - ii. Other elements that indicate adaptive management such as comprehensive and realistic work plans routinely developed that reflect adaptive management and/or changes in management arrangements to enhance implementation.

- iii. The project's use/establishment of electronic information technologies to support implementation, participation and monitoring, as well as other project activities.
 - iv. The general operational relationships between the institutions involved and others and how these relationships have contributed to effective implementation and achievement of project objectives.
 - v. Technical capacities associated with the project and their role in project development, management and achievements.
- Monitoring and evaluation (R). Including an assessment as to whether there has been adequate periodic oversight of activities during implementation to establish the extent to which inputs, work schedules, other required actions and outputs are proceeding according to plan; whether formal evaluations have been held and whether action has been taken on the results of this monitoring oversight and evaluation reports.
 - Stakeholder participation (R). This should include assessments of the mechanisms for information dissemination in project implementation and the extent of stakeholder participation in management, emphasizing the following:
 - i. The production and dissemination of information generated by the project.
 - ii. Local resource users and NGOs participation in project implementation and decision making and an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project in this arena.
 - iii. The establishment of partnerships and collaborative relationships developed by the project with local, national and international entities and the effects they have had on project implementation.
 - iv. Involvement of governmental institutions in project implementation, the extent of governmental support of the project.
 - Financial Planning: Including an assessment of:
 - i. The actual project cost by objectives, outputs, activities
 - ii. The cost-effectiveness of achievements
 - iii. Financial management (including disbursement issues)
 - iv. Co-financing 16
 - Sustainability. Extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after it has come to an end. Relevant factors include for example: development of a sustainability strategy, establishment of financial and economic instruments and mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the economy or community production activities.
 - Execution and implementation modalities. This should consider the effectiveness of the UNDP counterpart and Project Co-ordination Unit participation in selection, recruitment, assignment of experts, consultants and national counterpart staff members and in the definition of tasks and responsibilities; quantity, quality and timeliness of inputs for the project with respect to execution responsibilities, enactment of necessary legislation and budgetary provisions and extent to which these may have affected implementation and sustainability of the Project; quality and timeliness of inputs by UNDP and GoU and other parties responsible for providing inputs to the project, and the extent to which this may have affected the smooth implementation of the project.

4.3. Results

- Attainment of Outcomes/ Achievement of objectives (R): Including a description *and rating* of the extent to which the project's objectives (environmental and developmental) were achieved using Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory ratings. If the project did not establish a baseline (initial conditions), the evaluators should seek to determine it through the use of special methodologies so that achievements, results and impacts can be properly established.
- This section should also include reviews of the following:
- Sustainability: Including an appreciation of the extent to which benefits continue, within or outside the project domain after GEF assistance/external assistance in this phase has come to an end.

16 Please see guidelines at the end of Annex 1 of these TORs for reporting of co-financing.

- Contribution to upgrading skills of the national staff

5. Recommendations

- Corrective actions that need to be undertaken in order to retain and strengthen achieved results, in design of the future GEF supported projects, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the projects
- Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
- Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

6. Lessons learned

This should highlight the best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success.

7. Evaluation report Annexes

- Evaluation TORs
- Itinerary
- List of persons interviewed
- Summary of field visits
- List of documents reviewed
- Questionnaire used and summary of results
- Comments by stakeholders (only in case of discrepancies with evaluation findings and conclusions)
- others

Annex 2. List of documents to be reviewed by the evaluators

The following documents are essential reading for the evaluators:

- Project Document and any revisions;
- “Daughter” project document;
- Mid-term Evaluation report;
- CCA for Uzbekistan
- Websites –www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html
- M & E Operational Guidelines, all monitoring reports prepared by the project
- Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
- Quarterly and Monthly Progress Report and detailed activity progress reports
- Minutes of Steering Committee, Tripartite Programme Review and other project management meetings.
- Presentations and other inputs to the Steering Committee, TPR and project management meetings
- Combined Delivery Report
- Atlas Reports (such as the AWP and Project Budget Balance report)
- Project Implementation Reviews
- Inception Report
- UNDP User Guide (relevant sections)
- Project Boundary and Zonation Plan;
- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP); other relevant policy and legal documents requested by evaluator.

Other products and reports produced by the Project including:

- Technical Reports from sub-contractors and project responses;
- Past and draft legislation prepared;
- Baseline reports
- Strategy documents, internal system, management plans.
- Maps
- Publications
- Annual Reports

Annex 3. Indicative Timeframe

	Responsible / support	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Evaluation Preparation					
Briefing for evaluators	UNDP				
Document Review	Evaluation team				
Design approach and methods	Evaluation team				
Finalize evaluation methodology	Evaluation team				
Develop hypotheses about the project strategies and management	Evaluation team				
Prepare surveys	Evaluation team				
Evaluation Mission					
Meetings in Tashkent	Evaluation team/ UNDP & Project				
Field visit	Evaluation team/ UNDP & Project				
Interviews & Surveys	Evaluation team/ UNDP & Project				
Adaptive management learning	Evaluation team/ Project				
Debriefings / Presentation	Evaluation team				
Report writing- drafting	Evaluation team				
After-mission					
Finalize report	Evaluation team				
Report Submission – UNDP and Circulation of Report for comment	Evaluation team leader, UNDP CO, PIU, NPC				
Review and final submission of the report	Evaluation team				

Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

The evaluation matrix below serves as a general guide for the evaluation. It provides directions for the evaluation; particularly the collect of relevant data. It is used as a basis for interviewing people and reviewing project documents. It also provides a basis for structuring the evaluation report as a whole.

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Evaluation criteria: Relevance - How does the Project relate to the main objectives of the UNCBD, GEF, UNESCO-MAB and to the development challenges faced by the Government of Uzbekistan for the conservation of globally and nationally significant biodiversity?				
<i>Is the Project relevant to UNCBD and GEF objectives?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does the Project support the objectives of the UNCBD ▪ How does the Project support the objectives of the GEF for OP1, OP2 and OP3? ▪ Does the Project participate in the implementation of the UNCBD in Uzbekistan? ▪ Is the GEF incremental cost principle being respected? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of coherence between project objectives and those of the UNCBD Convention ▪ Degree of coherence between the project and national priorities, policies and strategies in the area of PAs ▪ UNCBD Convention status in Uzbekistan ▪ Extent to which the project is actually implemented in line with incremental cost argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents ▪ National policies and strategies to implement the UNCBD Convention or related to environment more generally ▪ Key government officials and other partners ▪ UNCBD web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documents analyses ▪ Interviews with government officials and other partners
<i>Is the Project relevant to UNESCO-MAB objectives?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does the Project support the objectives of the UNESCO-MAB network in general? ▪ How does the Project support the objectives of the UNESCO-MAB network in Uzbekistan? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level of coherence between project objectives and those of the UNESCO-MAB network ▪ UNESCO-MAB Network status in Uzbekistan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents ▪ National policies and strategies to implement the UNESCO-MAB network in Uzbekistan ▪ UNESCO-MAB web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documents analyses ▪ Interviews with government officials and other partners; including representatives from the Uzbek MAB committee
<i>Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does the Project support the objectives of UNDP in this sector; particularly the promotion of SHD in Uzbekistan? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existence of a clear relationship between the project objectives and sustainable development objectives of UNDP. ▪ Existence of a clear relationship between the project objectives and UNDP Strategic Results Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents ▪ UNDP strategies and programmes ▪ Key government officials and other partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documents analyses ▪ Interviews with government officials and other partners
<i>Is the Project relevant to Uzbekistan development objectives?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does the Project support the objectives of the development of Uzbekistan? ▪ How country-driven is the Project? ▪ Does the Project adequately take into account the national realities, both in terms of institutional framework and programming, in its design and its implementation? ▪ To what extent were national partners involved in the design of the Project? ▪ Were the GEF criteria for Project identification adequate in view of actual needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degree to which the project support national environmental objectives ▪ Degree of coherence between the project and national priorities, policies and strategies ▪ Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities? ▪ Level of involvement of Government officials and other partners into the project ▪ Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and UNDP-GEF criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents ▪ National policies and strategies (PRSP and NEP) ▪ Key government officials and other partners ▪ National policies and strategies to protect and manage the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documents analyses ▪ Interviews with government officials and other partners

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<i>Is the Project addressing the needs of target beneficiaries?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does the Project support the needs of target beneficiaries; including the managers of the reserve, the land owners, the land users and the population leaving in the area? ▪ Is the implementation of the Project been inclusive of all relevant Stakeholders? ▪ Are local beneficiaries and stakeholders adequately involved in Project design and implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strength of the link between expected results from the Project and the needs of target beneficiaries ▪ Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of beneficiaries and stakeholders in Project design and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beneficiaries and stakeholders ▪ Needs assessment studies ▪ Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholders
<i>How is the Project relevant in light of other donors?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With regards to Uzbekistan, does the Project remain relevant in terms of areas of focus and targeting of key activities? ▪ How do GEF-funds help to fill gaps (or give additional stimulus) that are crucial but are not covered by other donors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degree to which program was coherent and complementary to other donor programming in Uzbekistan and Regionally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other Donors' policies and programming documents ▪ Other Donor representatives ▪ Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documents analyses ▪ Interviews with other Donors
Lessons Learned – Best Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What lessons have been learnt and what changes should have been made to the Project in order to strengthen the alignment between the Project and the Partners' priorities and areas of focus? ▪ How could this type of project better target and address the priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data analysis
Evaluation criteria: Effectiveness – To what extent are the expected outcomes of the Project being achieved?				
<i>How is the Project effective in achieving its expected outcomes?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is the Project being effective in achieving its expected outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishment of a Biosphere Reserve which provides a legal and administrative framework for the achievement of integrated conservation and sustainable rural development objectives. ○ A detailed integrated management plan for the Biosphere Reserve which has been operationally tested during the project (pilot management plan) and upgraded/revised on the basis of this experience. ○ Increased awareness and valuation of biodiversity and its services by rural communities, local authorities / decision makers and the general public ○ Increased capacity of stakeholders (local conservation/natural resources authorities, rural communities) to influence and play a role in the conservation/appropriate use of biodiversity resources and pursuit of sustainable local development. ○ The demonstration and testing of methods and approaches to address the major threats to biodiversity in the project area through community based land and natural resource use pilot projects ○ Practical demonstration to protected areas authorities in Uzbekistan, and regionally, of new approaches to biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change of status and management resources for the Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve ▪ Change in biodiversity conservation through alternatives economic development activities ▪ Change in biodiversity habitats ▪ Change in capacity for information management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knowledge acquisition and sharing ○ Effective data gathering, methods and procedures for reporting on biodiversity ▪ Change in capacity for awareness raising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stakeholder involvement and government awareness ○ Change in local stakeholder behavior ▪ Change in capacity in policy making and planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy reform to preserve and improve biodiversity conservation ○ Legislation/regulation change to improve biodiversity conservation ○ Development of national and local strategies and plans supporting biodiversity; including ecological landscape plans ▪ Change in capacity in implementation and enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Design and implementation of risk assessments ○ Implementation of national and local strategies and action plans through adequate institutional frameworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents ▪ Key stakeholders ▪ Research findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documents analysis ▪ Meetings with main Project Partners including UNDP, Gov. of Uzbekistan and other Partners ▪ Interviews with Project Beneficiaries

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<i>Were Project activities designed to achieve Project outcomes?</i>	conservation and key lessons / factors important for development of similar initiatives. o Heightened profile of the area and increased capacity and opportunity to attract other relevant and complementary initiatives by UNDP / partners / co-financers.	and their maintenance o Monitoring, evaluation and promotion of pilots ▪ Change in capacity in mobilizing resources o Leverage of resources o human resources o appropriate practices o the mobilization of advisory services ▪ Existence, quality and use of M&E, feedback and dissemination mechanism to share findings, lessons learned and recommendation on effectiveness of project design		
	▪ Is there a direct and strong link between expected results of the Project (log frame) and the Project design (in terms of Project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources etc)? ▪ Is actual Project implementation coherent with Project design? ▪ Is the length of the Project conducting to achieve Project outcomes?	▪ Level of coherence between Project expected results and Project design internal logic ▪ Level of coherence between Project implementation approach and Project design	▪ Project document ▪ Key Project stakeholders	▪ Document analysis ▪ Key Interviews
	▪ How well are risks and assumptions being managed? ▪ What was the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Were these sufficient?	▪ Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during Project planning ▪ Quality of existing information systems in place to identify emerging risks and other issues? ▪ Quality of risk mitigations strategies developed and followed	▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNDP staff and Project Partners	▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
Lessons Learned – Best Practices	▪ What lessons have been learnt by the Project to achieve its outcomes? ▪ What changes should be made (if any) to the design of this type of project in order to improve the achievement of the Project' expected results? ▪ How could the Project have been more effective in achieving its results?		▪ Data collected throughout evaluation	▪ Data analysis
Evaluation criteria: <i>Efficiency - How efficiently was the Project implemented?</i>				
<i>Was Project support channelled in an efficient way?</i>	▪ Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use? ▪ Did the Project logical framework and work plans and any changes made to them use as management tools during implementation? ▪ Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes? ▪ How was RBM used during program and Project implementation? ▪ Was there an institutionalized or informal feedback or dissemination mechanism to ensure that findings, lessons learned and recommendations pertaining to Project design and	▪ Availability and quality of progress reports ▪ Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided ▪ Adequacy of Project choices in view of existing context, infrastructure and cost ▪ Quality of RBM reporting (progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation) ▪ Occurrence of change in Project design/ implementation approach (ie restructuring) when needed to improve Project efficiency ▪ Existence, quality and use of M&E, feedback and	▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNDP, Gov. of Uzbekistan and Project personnel ▪ Beneficiaries and Project partners	▪ Document analysis ▪ Key Interviews

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method	
<i>Were financial resources utilized efficiently?</i>	implementation effectiveness are shared among Project stakeholders, UNDP and GEF Staff and other relevant organizations for ongoing Project adjustment and improvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the Project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation? 	dissemination mechanism to share findings, lessons learned and recommendation on effectiveness of Project design. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender disaggregated data in Project documents 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for Project management and producing accurate and timely financial information? Was Project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual) Did the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happen as planned? Were financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability and quality of financial reports Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures Planned vs. Actual funds leveraged Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar Projects from other organizations Cost associated with delivery mechanism and management structure compare to alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP, Gov. of Uzbekistan and Project personnel Beneficiaries and Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Key Interviews 	
	<i>How efficient were partnership arrangements for the Project?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were partnerships/ linkages between institutions/ organizations being encouraged and supported? Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Which one can be considered sustainable? What is the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? (between local actors, UNDP-GEF and the Government of Uzbekistan) Which methods were successful or not and why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners, Examples of supported partnerships Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations Project Partners Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
	<i>Did the Project efficiently utilize local capacity in implementation?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise as well as local capacity? Did the Project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the Project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of total expertise utilized taken from Uzbekistan Number/quality of analyses done to assess local capacity potential and absorptive capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP and Project partners Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
	Lessons Learned – Best Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What lessons can be learnt from the Project on efficiency? How could the Project more efficiently address its key priorities (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements etc...)? What changes should be made (if any) to the Project in order to improve its efficiency? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis
Evaluation criteria: <i>Impacts</i> - What are the potential and realized impacts of activities carried out in the context of the Project?					
<i>How is the Project effective in achieving its long term goal and objectives?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the Project achieving its long term goal that is to conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan/the region? Is the Project achieving its objectives: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in status and management of the reserve Change in capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To pool/mobilize resources For related policy making and strategic planning, For implementation of related laws and strategies through adequate institutional frameworks and their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Key Stakeholders Research findings; if available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents analysis Meetings with UNDP and Project Partners Interviews with Project beneficiaries and other stakeholders 	

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<i>How is the Project effective in achieving the objectives of the UNCBD and UNESCO-MAB?</i> <i>Lessons Learned /Best Practices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o to promote a new and more sustainable approach to biodiversity conservation within the project area through the integration of conservation and sustainable natural resource development; o to promote local level awareness, ownership, capacity and commitment to the process of achieving biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the project area; o to provide a model for new approaches to the conservation of biodiversity in Uzbekistan / the region; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent is the Project focusing on building the capacity of key individuals and institutions at the national and local levels? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintenance, ▪ Change to the quantity and strength of barriers such as change in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Level of availability of information o Level of trained personnel or technical or managerial expertise o Level of regulatory biases or absence o Initial capital costs or accessibility to credit for sustainable alternatives o Perceived level of risks associated with the sustainable alternatives 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the impacts or likely impacts of the Project? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o On the local environment; particularly protecting the biodiversity; o On poverty; and, o On other socio-economic issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide specific examples of impacts at those three levels, as relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents ▪ UNCBD Convention's documents ▪ Key Stakeholders ▪ Research findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data analysis ▪ Interviews with key stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How could the Project build on its apparent successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data analysis
Evaluation criteria: Sustainability - Are the initiatives and results of the Project allowing for continued benefits?				
<i>Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in Project design?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were sustainability issues integrated into the design and implementation of the Project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence/Quality of sustainability strategy ▪ Evidence/Quality of steps taken to address sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNDP personnel and Project Partners ▪ Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
<i>Financial Sustainability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Did the Project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues? ▪ Are the recurrent costs after Project completion sustainable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level and source of future financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities in Uzbekistan after Project end? ▪ Evidence of commitments from government or other stakeholder to financially support relevant sectors of activities after project end ▪ Level of recurrent costs after completion of Project and funding sources for those recurrent costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNDP personnel and Project Partners ▪ Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
<i>Organizations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the results of efforts made during the Project implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degree to which Project activities and results have been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<i>arrangements and continuation of activities</i>	<p>period well assimilated by organizations and their internal systems and procedures?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there evidence that Project partners will continue their activities beyond Project support? What degree is there of local ownership of initiatives and results? Were appropriate 'champions' being identified and/or supported? 	<p>taken over by local counterparts or institutions/ organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities by in-country actors after Project end Number/quality of champions identified 	<p>evaluations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP personnel and Project Partners Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews
<i>Enabling Environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were laws and policies frameworks being addressed through the Project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms? Were the necessary related capacities for lawmaking and enforcement being built? What is the level of political commitment built on the results so far? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to support the development of relevant laws and policies State of enforcement and law making capacity Evidences of commitment by the political class through speeches, enactment of laws and resource allocation to priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP personnel and Project Partners Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<i>Institutional and individual capacity building</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the capacity in place at the national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved to date? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elements in place in those different management functions, at the appropriate levels (national, district and local) in terms of adequate structures, strategies, systems, skills, incentives and interrelationships with other key actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP personnel and Project Partners Beneficiaries Capacity assessments available, if any 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews Documentation review
<i>Social and political sustainability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the Project contribute to key building blocks for social and political sustainability? Did the Project contribute to citizens' acceptance of the new products or practices? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example of contributions to sustainable political and social change in support of the biosphere reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP personnel and Project Partners Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews Documentation review
<i>Replication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were/Are Project activities and results being replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up? What was the Project contribution to replication or scaling up of innovative practices or mechanisms that support the UNCBD objectives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number/quality of replicated initiatives Number/quality of replicated innovative initiatives Volume of additional investment leveraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other donor programming documents Beneficiaries UNDP personnel and Project Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<i>Challenges to sustainability of the Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of efforts? Have any of these been addressed through Project management? What could be the possible measures to further contribute to the sustainability of efforts achieved with the Project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges in view of building blocks of sustainability as presented above Recent changes which may present new challenges to the Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations Beneficiaries UNDP personnel and Project Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<i>Lessons Learned – Best Practices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which areas/arrangements under the Project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results? What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of the Project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis

Annex 3: List of Documents Reviewed

- Anstey Mark, 2007, *Introducing Appropriate Water Pumping Technology To Rural Uzbekistan: The Hydraulic Ram And Mechanical Wind Pump*
- GOU, 2004, *Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Protected Natural Territories” 2004*
- GOU & UNDP, *Community Development and Livelihoods Support on the Territory of the Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve*
- GEF, 2000, *Integrating Capacity Development into Project Design and Evaluation*
- GEF, 2006, *The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*
- GOU, 2004, *Draft Biosphere Reserve Nomination Form*
- GOU, 2006, *Biodiversity Incentive Mechanisms*
- GOU, 2006, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*
- GOU, 2006, *Assessment of Implementation of Component 1 of the National Biodiversity Action Plan*
- GOU, 2006, *Assessment of Implementation of Component 2 of the National Biodiversity Action Plan*
- GOU, 2006, *Assessment of Implementation of Component 3 of the National Biodiversity Action Plan*
- GOU, 2006, *Assessment of Capacity Constraints Faced in Regard to Biological Diversity Monitoring in Uzbekistan*
- GOU, *Assessment of the Current Situation In Uzbekistan Regarding Incentive Mechanisms for Biodiversity Sustainable Use*
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- Hurst Francis, 2004, *Mid-term Evaluation: Establishment of Nuratau – Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve as a Model for Conservation in Uzbekistan*
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Annex 4: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

I. RELEVANCE - *How does the Project relate to the main objectives of the UNCBD, GEF, UNESCO-MAB and to the development challenges faced by the Government of Uzbekistan for the conservation of globally and nationally significant biodiversity?*

- I.1. Is the Project relevant to UNCBD and GEF objectives?
- I.2. Is the Project relevant to UNESCO-MAB objectives?
- I.3. Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives?
- I.4. Is the Project relevant to Uzbekistan development objectives?
- I.5. Is the Project addressing the needs of target beneficiaries?
- I.6. How is the Project relevant in light of other donors?

Lessons Learned – Best Practices

- I.7. What lessons have been learnt and what changes should have been made to the Project in order to strengthen the alignment between the Project and the Partners' priorities and areas of focus?
- I.8. How could this type of project better target and address the priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries?

II. EFFECTIVENESS – *To what extent are the expected outcomes of the Project being achieved?*

- II.1. How is the Project effective in achieving its expected outcomes?
 - o Establishment of a Biosphere Reserve which provides a legal and administrative framework for the achievement of integrated conservation and sustainable rural development objectives.
 - o A detailed integrated management plan for the Biosphere Reserve which has been operationally tested during the project (pilot management plan) and upgraded/revised on the basis of this experience.
 - o Increased awareness and valuation of biodiversity and its services by rural communities, local authorities / decision makers and the general public
 - o Increased capacity of stakeholders (local conservation/natural resources authorities, rural communities) to influence and play a role in the conservation/appropriate use of biodiversity resources and pursuit of sustainable local development.
 - o The demonstration and testing of methods and approaches to address the major threats to biodiversity in the project area through community based land and natural resource use pilot projects

- Practical demonstration to protected areas authorities in Uzbekistan, and regionally, of new approaches to biodiversity conservation and key lessons / factors important for development of similar initiatives.
- Heightened profile of the area and increased capacity and opportunity to attract other relevant and complementary initiatives by UNDP / partners / co-financers.

II.2. Were Project activities designed to achieve Project outcomes?

II.3. How was risk and risk mitigation being managed?

Lessons Learned – Best Practices

II.4. What lessons have been learnt by the Project to achieve its outcomes?

II.5. What changes should be made (if any) to the design of this type of project in order to improve the achievement of the Project' expected results?

II.6. How could the Project have been more effective in achieving its results?

III. EFFICIENCY - *How efficiently was the Project implemented?*

III.1. Was Project support channelled in an efficient way?

III.2. Were financial resources utilized efficiently?

III.3. How efficient were partnership arrangements for the Project?

III.4. Did the Project efficiently utilize local capacity in implementation?

Lessons Learned – Best Practices

III.5. What lessons can be learnt from the Project on efficiency?

III.6. How could the Project more efficiently address its key priorities (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements etc...)?

III.7. What changes should be made (if any) to the Project in order to improve its efficiency?

IV. IMPACTS - *What are the potential and realized impacts of activities carried out in the context of the Project?*

IV.1. How is the Project effective in achieving its long term goal that is to conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan/the region?

IV.2. How is the Project effective in achieving its long term objectives?

- to promote a new and more durable approach to biodiversity conservation within the project area through the integration of conservation and sustainable natural resource development;

- o to promote local level awareness, ownership, capacity and commitment to the process of achieving biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the project area;
- o to provide a model for new approaches to the conservation of biodiversity in Uzbekistan / the region;

IV.3. How is the Project effective in achieving the objectives of the UNCBD and UNESCO-MAB?

Lessons Learned – Best Practices

IV.4. How could the Project build on its apparent successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?

V. SUSTAINABILITY - *Are the initiatives and results of the Project allowing for continued benefits?*

V.1. Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in Project design?

V.2. Financial Sustainability

V.3. Organizations arrangements and continuation of activities

V.4. Enabling Environment

V.5. Institutional and individual capacity building

V.6. Social and political sustainability

V.7. Replication

V.8. Challenges to sustainability of the Project

Lessons Learned – Best Practices

V.9. Which areas/arrangements under the Project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results?

V.10. What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of the Project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed?

VI. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

VI.1. What are the main issues, if any, that have affected implementation for this project?

VI.2. Were there any changes in the project implementation approach which affected the potential to achieve the project goal (in positive or negative ways)?

VII. ANY OTHER COMMENTS ON THE PROJECT?

Thank you very much for your input.

Annex 5: List of Interviews

Name	Position / Contact	Organization
Mr. Alexey Volkov (*)	Environment Specialist	UNDP
Mr. Sergey Zagrebin (*)	Project Manager	NKBR Project
Mr. Sardor Djurabaev (*)	Administrative Finance Assistant	NKBR Project
Ms. Kyoko Postill	Deputy Resident Representative	UNDP
Mr. Alexandr Grigoryants (*)	Deputy Chief	State Bio-control committee (SCNP)
Mr Bakhritdin K. Muradov (*)	Head Specialist	Ministry of Economy
Mr. Djaloliddin Azimov (*)	Director	Institute of Zoology
Mr. Yuriy Chikin	WWF Representative in Uzbekistan	WWF
Mr. Anvar Nasritdinov	Head, Environment and Energy Unit	UNDP
Ms. Adriana Dinu	Regional Technical Advisor, Biodiversity	UNDP-GEF, Europe and CIS, Bratislava Regional Centre
Mr. Mark Anstey (*)	Project Chief Technical Advisor	NKBR Project
Mr. Alikhanov Boriy Botirovich (*)	Chairman	SCNP
Mr. Murod Ganiev	Deputy Head of Forestry Management Committee	Ministry of Agriculture and Water Economy
Mr. Akmal Istmatov	Deputy Head	Department of Strict Nature Reserves, National Natural Parks and Game reserves
Mr. Thomas Falk	Rural Development Expert	DED
Mr. Abror Khodjaev	National Coordinator of "Community Development and Livelihoods Support" sub-project	NKBR Project
Mr. Bayram Uzakov	Governor	Farish District
Mr. Turgun Ungalov	Farmer	Yotok-say
Mr. Hamza Temirov	Farmer	Yotok-say
Mr Komiljon Shokirov	Credit Union	Yangikishlok
Mr Abdulla Azizov	NGO Representative	Yangikishlok
Ms. Muhabbat Tirkacheva	Teacher	School No 19 – Birlashgan
Ms. Quvatova Nargiza	Teacher	School No 19 – Birlashgan
Mr. Sultonov Azim	Teacher	School No 19 – Birlashgan
Mr. Ibragimov Shakar	Teacher	School No 19 – Birlashgan
Mr. Khamid Kochikov	Tenant (land-user)	Yukari Uchma
Mr. Davron Kochikov	Tenant (land-user)	Yukari Uchma
Mr. Abdusalom Hakimov	Water Pump Maker	Andegen
Mr. Bakhrom Kasimov	Water Pump User	Yukari Uhum
Mr. Suratbek Yusupov	Director & Expert on Rangelands and Livestock Management	Institute of Karakul Sheep breeding and ecology of desert,
Mr. Ahmad Ibotov	Livestock National Consultant	Sartikan

Name	Position / Contact	Organization
Mr. Shirin Turdiev	Farmer	Turdi Bobo Farm
Mr. Orzimurod Ruziev	Community Center Secretary - Local participant of rangelands and livestock management	Katta Ich
Mr. Akram Rakhmonov		
Mr. Mukhiddin Haydarov		Kichik say
Mr. Mustafa Egamkulov	Manager Collective Farm	Abay
Ms. E. Zakhidova	Director	School №12 – Navoi
Mr. Eshmamat Togaev	Deputy Head	SCNP - Navoi Region
Mr. Sakhib Esanbaev	Deputy Head	SCNP - Samarkand
Mr. Mirzaahmad Mamedov	Deputy Head	SCNP - Samarkand
Mr. Dilmurod Ruziev	Inspection on conservation of plants and animals	SCNP - Samarkand
Mr. Kholmatov, Erkin Ergashevich	Chairman	SCNP – Djizzak Region
Mr. Sergey Myagkov	GEF focal point	Uzhymet
Mr. Fikret Akcura (*)	Resident Representative	UNDP
Mrs. Irina Bekmirzayeva (*)	Head of the International department	SCNP
Mr. Sherzod Shermatov (*)	Head of Good Governance Unit	UNDP
Mr. Ravshan Mamurov (*)	Programme Specialist Economic Governance Unit	UNDP
Ms. Nodira Normatova (*)	Legal Specialist	UNDP
Ms. Aziza Askarova (*)	Communications and Outreach Specialist	UNDP
Ms. Marina Ten (*)	Program Specialist	UNDP

(*) Participated to the Debriefing Workshop on June 19, 2007 at UNDP CO Tashkent

Annex 6: Mission Agenda

Date / Time	Event	People	Location
Wednesday June 6			
Tashkent			
4:25 am	Airport arrival	Jean-Joseph Bellamy, International consultant)	Airport
12:00-16:00	Project Team and UNDP meeting	Alexey Volkov, Environment Specialist Sergey Zagrebin, Project Manager Sardor Djurabaev, Administrative Finance Assistant Natalya Marmazinskaya, National Consultant	Project Office
16:00-17:00	Meeting	Ms. Kyoko Postill, Deputy Resident Representative	UNDP CO
17:30-18:30	Meeting	Mr. Alexandr Grigoryants, Deputy of Chief, State Biocontrol committee under SCNP	UNDP CO
Thursday June 7			
Tashkent			
9:30-10:30	Meeting	Mr Bakhriddin K. Muradov , Head Specialist at the Ministry of Economy	UNDP CO
11:00-12:30	Meeting	Mr. Djaloliddin Azimov, Director, Institute of Zoology	Institute of Zoology
12:30-13:30	Meeting	Mr. Yuriy Chikin, WWF Representative in Uzbekistan	Institute of Zoology
14:30-15:00	Meeting	Mr. Anvar Nasritdinov, Head, Environment and Energy Unit, UNDP	UNDP CO
15:00-15:30	Tele-conference	Ms. Adriana Dinu, Regional Technical Advisor, Biodiversity UNDP-GEF, Europe and CIS, for EE Practice Manager Bratislava Regional Centre	UNDP CO
17:00-18:00	Meeting	Mr. Mark Anstey, Project CTA	Project Office
Friday June 8			
Tashkent			
9:00-9:30	Meeting	Mr. Alikhanov Boriy Botirovich, Chairman SCNP	SCNP
10:30-11:30	Meeting	Mr. Murod Ganiev, Deputy Head of Forestry Management Committee under the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Economy of the Republic of Uzbekistan.	Forestry Management Committee
11:30-12:30	Meeting	Mr. Akmal Istmatov , Deputy Head, The Department of the Strict Nature Reserves, National Natural Parks and Game reserves	Forestry Management Committee
19:15-21:00	Dinner meeting	Mr. Thomas Falk, Rural Development Expert, DED	
Saturday June 9			
11:00 – 14:00	Travel to Yangikishlok, Farish district, Djizzakh region		

Date / Time	Event	People	Location
16:30-17:30	Presentation on Community Development and Livelihood Support in BR Territory	Mr. Abror Khodjaev, National Coordinator of “Community Development and Livelihoods Support” sub-project	NKBR Visit Center
17:30-18:00	Meeting	Mr. Bayram Uzakov, Governor of Farish District	Yangikishlok town
18:30-19:30	Presentation on Community Development and Livelihood Support in BR Territory (cont’d)	Mr. Abror Khodjaev, National Coordinator of “Community Development and Livelihoods Support” sub-project	NKBR Visit Center
Sunday June 10 Field Visit			
9:00-14:00	Site visit of tree plantation	Farmer Mr. Turgun Ungalov Farmer Mr. Hamza Temirov	Yotok-say village
14:00-17:00	Meeting on major project milestones	Mr. Sergey Zagrebin, Project manager	NKBR Visit Center
Monday June 11 Field Visit			
9:00-9:30	Meeting at Credit Union	Mr Komiljon Shokirov, Credit Union Mr Abdulla Azizov, NGO Representative	Yangikishlok town
10:00-11:00	Visit youth center	Ms. Muhabbat Tirkacheva (teacher, the leader) Ms. Quvatova Nargiza (teacher) Mr. Sulstonov Azim (teacher) Mr. Ibragimov Shakar (teacher)	School №19 Birlashgan village
11:30-15:30	Site visit of tree plantation	Mr. Khamid Kochikov, the tenant (land-user) Mr. Davron Kochikov, the tenant (land-user)	Yukari Uchma village
16:00-17:00	Site visit of water pump maker and biogas site	Mr. Abdusalom Hakimov	Andegen village
17:30-18:00	Site visit of water pump	Mr. Bakhrom Kasimov	Yukari Uhum village
Tuesday June 12 Field Visit			
9:00-10:00	Meeting Veterinary Services	Mr. Suratbek Yusupov, Director of Institute of Karakul Sheep breeding and ecology of desert, Expert on Rangelands and Livestock Management Mr. Ahmad Ibotov, Livestock National Consultant	Sartikan Village
10:30-13:00	Site visit	Mr. Shirin Turdiev, Turdi Bobo Farm	Turdi Bobo
13:00-14:00	Drive to Eski Farish		
Wednesday June 13 Field Visit			
9:30-10:00	Meeting	Mr. Orzimurod Ruziev, local participant of rangelands and livestock management	Secretary at Community center of Katta Ich Village

Date / Time	Event	People	Location
10:30-11:30	Visit Veterinary Services	Mr. Akram Rakhmonov	
	Meeting	Mr. Mukhiddin Haydarov	Kichik say Village
16:30-17:00	Meeting Visit Veterinary Services	Mr. Mustafa Egamkulov, Manager of Collective Farm	Abay Village
Thursday June 14			
Field Visit			
13:00-13:30	School visit (School №12)	Ms. E. Zakhidova, Director of school №12	Navoi city
13:30-14:30	Meeting	Mr. Eshmamat Togaev, Deputy Head of SCNP in the region of Navoi	Navoi city
Friday June 15			
Field Visit			
9:00-10:00	Meeting	Mr. Sakhib Esanbaev , Deputy Head SCNP-Samarkand Mr. Mirzaahmad Mamedov, Deputy Head SCNP-Samarkand Mr. Dilmurod Ruziev, Inspection on conservation of plants and animals, SCNP- Samarkand	SCNP-Samarkand
10:30-12:30	Visit of Samarkand		Samarkand
14:00-15:00	Site visit of Zarafhsan Strict Nature Reserve	Ms. Natalya Marmazinskaya	Samarkand region
16:30-17:00	Meeting	Mr. Kholmatov, Erkin Ergashevich, Chairman of SCNP of Djizzak region	Djizzak region
17:00	Travel to project office		
Saturday June 16			
Tashkent			
9:00-10:00	Return to Tashkent		Hotel
12:00-16:00	Notes Review		
Sunday June 17			
Tashkent			
10:00-14:00	Prepare debriefing presentation		Hotel
Monday June 18			
Tashkent			
9:00-10:00	Meeting	Mr. Alexey Volkov, UNDP Environmental Specialist	UNDP-CO
11:00-11:30	Meeting	Mr. Sergey Myagkov, GEF focal point, Uzhyet	UZHYMET
Tuesday June 19			
Tashkent			
10:00	De-briefing	Mr. Fikret Akcura, UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Alikhanov, Boriy Botirovich, SCNP Mrs. Irina Bekmirzayeva, Head of the International department at SCNP Mr. Grigoryants, Aleksandr Arkadyevich, NPC	UNDP-CO

Date / Time	Event	People	Location
		Mr. Mark Anstey, Project Chief Technical Advisor Mr. Bakhritdin Muradov, Specialist at the Ministry of Economy Mr. Djalol Azimov, Director of the Institute of Zoology Mr. Sherzod Shermatov, UNDP, Head of Good Governance Unit Mr. Ravshan Mamurov, UNDP Programme Specialist, Economic Governance Unit Mr. Aleksey Volkov, UNDP Environment Specialist Mr. Sergey Zagrebin, Project Manager Mr. Sardor Djurabaev, Project AFA Ms. Nodira Normatova, UNDP Legal Specialist Ms. Aziza Askarova, UNDP Communications and Outreach Specialist Ms. Marina Ten, UNDP Program Specialist	
14:00-15:00	Meeting	Mr. Sardor Djurabaev, Project AFA	Project Office
15:00-16:00	Mission Wrap-up	Mr. Sergey Zagrebin, Project Manager Mr. Sardor Djurabaev, Project AFA	Project Office
Wednesday June 20		Tashkent	
4:15am	Departure Airport	Jean-Joseph Bellamy	

Annex 7: List of Project Achievements

Objectives	Outcomes	Achievements
To conserve the globally important biodiversity, landscapes and cultural assets of the Nuratau Mountain Range and the adjacent Kyzylkum Desert and to provide a model for protected area development in Uzbekistan and the region.	1. The unique national and global biodiversity value and the mosaic of natural and cultural landscapes in the project area conserved;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundary and Zonation Plan of the proposed BR prepared and agreed with all stakeholders • National legislative framework (i.e. the Law on Protected Natural Areas) revised to include article “biosphere reserve” • Legal and administrative documents required for official establishment of a BR prepared and submitted for review and approval to the Government of Uzbekistan through the executing agency of the project • Draft Management plan prepared and agreed with all involved stakeholders; GIS layers prepared and training on use of GIS conducted
	2. Local authorities and communities have a better awareness and valuation of biodiversity resources and services and an understanding of the principles of sustainable development;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Center for the future NKBR established and functioning in the project territory • 12 other local education centres established and functioning in different parts of project territory • Educational materials as well as trainers’ guides prepared and disseminated among local people and in local schools • More than 200 publication in international, national and local mass media, more than 50 radio and TV programs, 130 trainings and round tables, including trainers training took place
	3. The capacity of local authorities and communities to play an active role in the planning and management of natural resources and development of sustainable livelihoods in place;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic groups established namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3 initiative groups in 3 parts of the project area; ○ Forestry Joint Management Council; ○ Association of pasture users. • Key decision makers capacity was increased through activities of the project, including Project Steering Committee meetings and joint planning of the project activities • Key decision makers take part in work of two civic group: Forestry Joint Management Council and Association of pasture users
	4. Types of land use reduced within the project area with negative effects on the ecosystems and the basis established for the long term sustainable development of the area in place;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Forestry management approach (“community forestry”) demonstrated and lessons learned recorded, future steps identified. • Improved livestock management approaches identified and under implementation, including activities on restoration and improvement of pastures and breed improvement • Small scale household based tourism approaches developed and currently being tested. • Assessment of hunting sector drafted and pilot activities at late planning or initial implementation stages.
	5. New “inclusive” and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Community forestry” Report on lessons learned prepared to be further disseminated

Objectives	Outcomes	Achievements
	sustainable human development-oriented approaches to the conservation of biodiversity in Uzbekistan developed and tested;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange information with other UNDP-GEF projects in Uzbekistan on key experiences and lessons learned such as boundary and zonation process, legal establishment process, experience of project's components shared • Project experience is shared with UNEP-GEF project on Econet • Project experience and lessons learnt shared with CCD GTZ project, UNDP-GEF BD FSP "Integrated Conservation of Priority Globally Significant Migratory Bird Wetland Habitat" (Kazakhstan)