



16 March 2017

MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE PROJECT APPRAISAL COMMITTEE

For the project: Improving the Management of Protected Areas

Date and time: 16 March 2017
Venue: UNDP Conference Room

Chair:

Narine Sahakyan, Deputy Resident Representative

Members:

Anita Kodzoman, Head of Energy, Environment and DRR Unit
Harald Schenker, Chief Technical Advisor Governance
Zoran Samardzhev, Operations Manager
Dimitar Sekovski, Programme Officer, Energy, Environment and DRR Unit
Emil Angelov, Programme Officer, Governance Unit
Jasmina Belchovska-Tasevska, M & E and Innovation Associate
Ilmiasan Dauti, Decentralization and Local Development Specialist and Project Manager
Dejan Dokuzovski, Project Manager
Biljana Nastovska, Gender Specialist

Presentation of the project:

The environment team presented the project - the aim, its objectives, main outputs, and the implementation strategy. The overall objective of the project is to improve nature protection and to promote sustainable use of natural resources while increasing the capacity of designated authorities, local governments and NGOs to manage and promote protected areas professionally and sustainably.

The central feature of the project is a grant scheme which will be established to finance the implementation of pilot measures which have three main goals: 1) to address priority needs in improving the management of protected areas, where possible including those proposed as NATURA 2000 sites; 2) to promote more sustainable use of natural resources; and 3) to demonstrate through practical examples that nature protection and the economic development of local communities can go hand and hand.

Technical assistance and support will be provided to counterparts and beneficiaries in identifying and designing projects and implementing the grant scheme. This will help create long-term local capacity and capability for implementing similar projects. Projects will be prioritized in line with their potential for wider replication.

Up to 20 priority measures for conservation and sustainable use of natural resources identified in protected area management plans and/or other relevant action plans at national and local levels will be implemented by local governments, management authorities of protected areas and/or NGOs. At least two waste-water treatment facilities will be designed and constructed in or around protected areas to demonstrate the environmental and economic benefits of new approaches and technologies.



By the end of the project, public institutions, local governments and NGOs will have enhanced project management skills needed to design and implement relevant measures in line with EU and international standards. Together this will contribute to more sustainable management of natural resources and improve the country's preparedness to implement key EU frameworks, including the Birds and Habitats Directives, and fulfil national commitments arising from the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

The project is financed through the IPA 2 Instrument with EUR 4,000,000 and UNDP contribution of EUR 300,000, and will be implemented in the period 2017 – 2019.

Discussion:

The following points were raised and discussed at the meeting:

- PAC members found the composition of the programmatic activities well designed and responding to the current challenges that the country is facing with in this area. While the members have been briefed on the donor requirements and the needs of the main counterpart the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning that have been integrated in the project design with which they agree and find relevant, project design team has been advised to take few considerations on board when implementing the activities. They relate to the modality of implementation of the activities, whereby in addition to the grant scheme, other modalities should be explored, and option for creation of local partnerships being that through inter-municipal cooperation approach, or complementary activities with the centers for regional development especially in the regions where protected area extends on the territory on more than one municipality. The activities should also be looked at from the perspective of the Europe 2020 strategy when relates to employment generation opportunities in the protected areas.
- The project document presents very well elaborated results framework with well-defined with indicators that cover all outputs and annually defined targets to achieve. This framework illustrates the project's theory of change and clearly presents the contribution towards achieving Outcome 4 results from the CPD and the joint annual workplan 2017-2018 for the Environment related outcome in the UN PSD. In accordance to the latest monitoring policy, the team has been advised to additionally look at the project's monitoring framework and consider developing fully costed monitoring plan, including the need and relevance of adding end-of-project evaluation. Audit costs should also be included in the budget.
- The PAC members reviewed the design phase quality assurance form as well as the SESP assessment for the project and agreed with the assessment and rating of the project. Both documents are attached to these minutes for proper documenting and filing purposes.
- In compliance with the latest CPD gender policy, the team included a gender assessment and baseline study at the inception phase of the project implementation, an activity to commend. The gender focal point will provide additional feedback in track changes directly in the text of the document following the meeting, and those will be integrated in the final version of the project document.

Conclusions and next steps:

- PAC members recommend approval and signature of the project document for the Project: Improving the Management of Protected Areas as soon as the document is approved by the donor and the national counterparts.

Signed, on behalf of all PAC members, by the PAC Chair:

Narine Sahakyan, Deputy Resident Representative

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Narine Sahakyan', written over a horizontal line.