



ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

United Nations Development Programme

Kazakhstan

**“Conservation and Sustainable Management of Key Globally Important
Ecosystems for Multiple Benefits”, 00101043
2022**



Photo: Saltore Saparbayev

Reporting Period	2022
Donor	Global Environment Facility
Country	Kazakhstan
Project Title	Conservation and Sustainable Management of Key Globally Important Ecosystems for Multiple Benefits
Project ID Quantum Award ID Outputs Strategic Plan and/or CPD Outcomes	00101043 00097224 Contributing Outcome (CPD 2021-2025): 3.2. By 2025, all people in Kazakhstan, in particular the most vulnerable, benefit from increased climate resilience, sustainable management of environment and clean energy, and sustainable rural and urban development. CPD Output 4.1: Solutions developed, and resources mobilized for more sustainable use of ecosystems for the improvement of the well-being of local communities and nature
Implementing Partner(s)	Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the RK
Project Start Date	April 16, 2018
Project End Date	October 15, 2024
2022 Annual Work Plan Budget	1,269,771 USD
Total resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$8,069,178 USD (GEF) • \$200,000 USD (UNDP)
Revenue received	Parallel co-financing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture - \$70,510,507; • Institute of Zoology - \$59,249; • Almaty Province - \$8,229,217; • East Kazakhstan Province - \$7,177,711; • WWF- \$318,992; • ACBK - \$300,000
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I. Executive summary

Project is implemented in accordance with the approved work plans and Project Document in compliance with UNDP procedures and standards.

The key results are:

Currently, the feasibility studies on expansion 3 PAs (Karatau Nature Reserve, Kolsai Kolderi and Zhongar Alatau National Parks) and creation of Merke Regional Park with an estimated coverage of 270,988.2 ha have been drafted. The development of scientific rationale and feasibility study on creation of 5 new PAs without status of legal entity (protected areas and reserves) with an estimated coverage of 1,524,521 hectares is being performed. Akimat of Zhambyl oblast reserved 78.0 thousand hectares of land for further establishment of the regional park "Merke."

The effectiveness of protected areas management has been strengthened by updating the Rules on the development of management plan for protected areas, 113 protected area staff members have been trained in new planning approaches. Management plans are used to justify budget funding and plan alternative sources of funding for the development of PAs, thus contributing to the increase of state spending for maintenance of specially protected natural territories

Forests of high conservation value were identified in 8 pilot leskhozoes and measures for their management and monitoring were developed. To enhance private investments in afforestation, the development of model private forest plantation projects taking into account natural and climatic conditions and results/lessons learned from implemented pilots have been supported. The model private forest plantation projects for the eastern regions were developed.

Land Functional Zoning Schemes and Land Landscape Management Plans have been developed for more than 5.0 million hectares. The management of forest pastures on the area of more than 81.0 thousand ha has been improved. Under ecotourism promotion work 3 pilot tourist routes in Sairam-Ugam, Katon-Karagai and "Kolsai Kolderi" national parks were developed with digitalization of 5 (virtual) tours for pilot protected areas.

Project has also contributed to the increase of PAs technical capacities through provision of specific agrotechnical, monitoring equipment, including tractors, walk-behind tractors, plows, mobile residential cars, rototillers, drip irrigation, SMART patrolling equipment etc and improving infrastructure.

Under the wildlife conservation work, UNDP contributed to the improvement of the snow leopard monitoring data and updated the annual populations assessment of snow leopard in 2022. The results show an increase in the population, reaching up to 180 snow leopards. Further achievements include the update of the National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Conservation Plan and the introduction of the SMART patrol system in seven (7) target PAs. Financial planning and management are properly made in accordance with UNDP procedures and standards.

The revised 2022 audited budget was \$1,269,771, with \$1,148,572 (90%) actually expended. A total of \$5,360,430 has been spent since the start of the Project, which is 66.5%. The balance of \$2,774,098

II. Background

The Project is aimed to improve the conservation and management of forest resources and adjacent grassland, floodplain and desert ecosystems, which are valuable for biodiversity conservation, land resources and welfare of local communities. The Project also focuses on promoting the gender equality and women empowerment as relevant and possible within the Project. In this direction, the Project will address the challenges of sustainable use of natural resources by promoting innovative gender-responsible solutions based on improved capacity, new knowledge, new opportunities, increased participation of women in the development and implementation of effective methods and approaches of sustainable forest and rangeland management, etc.

The project strategy is to comprehensively address the issues of conservation and sustainable use of forest ecosystems in Kazakhstan by improving management approaches both within the system of protected areas (hereinafter - PAs) and in adjacent landscapes with a view to sustainable use of high conservation value forests (hereinafter - HCVFs).

To achieve the Project goal and reduce certain threats and barriers, the project structure involves 3 Components:

Component 1: Increasing the representativeness of globally important forest ecosystem biodiversity in the network of protected areas and improving the efficiency of management of protected areas

Component 2: Promoting the integration of forest protected areas in the landscape context by creating conditions for the effective regulation and management of globally important ecosystems.

Component 3: International cooperation and knowledge management.

Geographically, the target project areas coincide with the key biodiversity areas (KBA) identified in Kazakhstan, including the mountain, tugai and saxaul forests. The listed ecosystems, among which the mountain ecosystems are the main habitat of snow leopard, are forming part of 3 administrative oblasts, where the Project is planned to be implemented: East Kazakhstan oblast (mountain areas of Altai and Saur-Tarbagatai), Almaty oblast (Zhongar Alatau, Northern and Central Tien Shan, floodplain forests of the Charyn and Ili rivers, and Pribalkhash saxaul forests), and South Kazakhstan oblast (mountain ecosystems of Western Tien Shan and floodplain forests of Syrdarya river).

III. Progress Review

Progress of the Project indicators is given in Annex 1

Component 1: Increasing the representativeness of globally important forest ecosystem biodiversity in the network of protected areas and improving the efficiency of management of protected areas, including high conservation value forests

To preserve biodiversity and key ecosystems and high conservation value forests:

- Work on expanding the PAs network by creating the Merke Regional Park and expanding the territory of 3 pilot PAs with a total planned coverage of 270,988 ha is continuing;
- at the local level (Almaty and Zhetysu regions), there was awareness-raising on activities to expand and create PAs involving all stakeholders (Akimats, forestries, the local population);
- the field scientific study was completed, the drafting of natural-science justification for the creation of five new PAs (Usek reserve, Koksui reserve, Ketmen reserve, Terskey reserve zone, Saur-Manyrak reserve zone) was started;
- from October 16 to 19 of this year, meetings were held at the Akimat level of Turkestan and Zhambyl regions to expand the territory of the Karatau Reserve and the creation of the Merke Regional Park;
- the Akimat of Turkestan province agreed to support the expansion of the Karatau reserve by 52,000 ha from the state land fund;
- on November 1, 2022, Decree No. 243 of the Akim of Zhambyl Region reserved 72,710 ha of territory for the future establishment of the Merke Regional Park;

To improve biodiversity monitoring, conservation of forest ecosystems and high conservation value forests:

- A group of experts carried out field trips and scientific research to evaluate the state of biodiversity in the pilot areas (Altai and Saur-Tarbagatai, Zhetysu Alatau, Northern and Western Tien Shan);
- cameral data processing was completed, the analysis of the current state of biodiversity and ecosystems in 5 pilot PAs (Sairam-Ugam National Park, Aksu-Zhabagaly Reserve, Syrdarya-Turkestan Regional Park, Charyn National Park, Ile-Alatau National Park) was prepared;

To improve the planning and management of environmental organizations:

- Management Plan for 14 pilot PAs was finalized in accordance with the updated structure and methodology of management plans for conservation organizations;
- the Rules for Development of the Management Plan for Environmental Organizations (Order of the Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources No. 643 dated 04.10.2022) were approved;

- Management Plan for 16 pilot PAs for 2023-2027 was finalized;
- training sessions were organized and conducted for PAs staff on planning and developing the Management Plan for the updated structure. 93 employees of 23 PAs were trained at regional training sessions;
- To raise public awareness, the PAs Atlas of Kazakhstan is being developed, and it contains cartographic general information about the locations of PAs and includes data on the natural values and the use of these areas for economic purposes.
- virtual tours to tourist routes of 5 pilot PAs (Katon-Karagai, Kolsai Lakes, Tarbagatai and Sairam-Ugam SPA; West Altai SNNP) were developed to promote ecological tourism using modern information technology. Virtual tours were presented on November 8, 2022 in Katon-Karagai SNNP and on November 25, 2022 in the Kolsai Lakes SNNP during workshops on the development of ecological tourism.

To improve the natural complexes conservation and increase the capacity of the pilot PAs:

- installation of alternative energy sources in remote cordons has started;
- installation of 13 wind-solar panels in Almaty and Zhetysu regions has been completed;
- To strengthen the material and technical equipment of the system of monitoring and conservation of biodiversity in the Project areas, rechargeable batteries for photo traps (1,880 pcs.) with chargers (14 pcs.) were provided to 14 pilot PAs.

Component 2. Promoting the integration of forest protected areas in the landscape context by creating conditions for the effective regulation and management of globally important ecosystems

- The Project continues to work on High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF):
 - the international expert A. Bondaryov is involved to provide international expert and advisory support to the Kazakhstan Garysh Sapary NC JSC national company in carrying out work on the implementation of the HCVF concept in Kazakhstan.
 - a Draft Practical Guide on the determination and allocation of HCVF in RK was developed under the guidance of an international expert of Kazakhstan Garysh Sapary NC JSC. 6 national categories and 20 types of HCVF are defined for Kazakhstan, their identification criteria are defined and their description is completed. HCVFs were identified in 8 pilot forestries of Almaty, Zhetysu and East Kazakhstan regions. Field studies of 8 pilot forestries were carried out to verify the selected HCVF sites, HCVF maps of the pilot forestries were developed with the HCVF categories, and threats from economic activities, which can have a negative impact on the selected HCVFs, were identified. Draft recommendations including HCVF management plans and monitoring plan in the context of pilot forest conservation agencies were developed;
- Zhongar Forest Conservation Agency (Zhetysu region) was supported in fencing the area of Arasan Forest Nursery (49 rolls of articulated netting were procured and delivered). The Nursery is specialized in the cultivation of coniferous and deciduous species, for landscaping settlements

and afforestation of the SFF as part of the Message of the President on the planting of 2 billion trees;

- An international expert was engaged to prepare a strategic planning tool for forest conservation agencies. International experience in the development of management plans for forest conservation agencies was analyzed under the contract. A draft methodology for developing forest management plans and the structure of a management plan for forest conservation agencies has been prepared. Management plans are planned to be tested and developed on the example of 2 pilot forestries in Almaty and East Kazakhstan regions;
- Identification of ecosystem services involving the Karadala and Ridder pilot forestries was carried out under a contract with a national PES expert, and 2 potential PES schemes were selected and developed for use by forest conservation agencies. Guidelines for the implementation of the PES tool were prepared based on the example of 2 project areas;
- the publication of the developed training programme to improve the capacity of employees of forest conservation agencies for distribution among the pilot forestries of Almaty, East Kazakhstan and Zhetysu regions, as well as among research institutes;
- the recommendations and proposals for improving the current regulatory documents governing the conservation, reproduction and conservation of forest reproduction and reforestation were presented and adopted at the meeting of the Scientific and Technical Council of the Forestry and Wildlife Committee on October 11, 2022;
- a seed drill for sowing saxaul seeds CBC-01 was developed, its field trial tests were conducted. In August 2022, the seed drill was put into trial operation at the Bakanas forestry. The developer company (Tree Energy LLP) received a Conformity Certificate for TR CU 010/2011, Copyright Certificate and Patent for Invention. 2 seed drills were developed and given to Bakanas (Almaty region) and Zharkent (Zhetysu region) forestry farms under the Forest Project to assist in the autumn sowing of saxaul. Also, the developer received and executed an order of the National Forest Breeding and Seed Center for 20 sets of seed drills;
- contracts were signed with national experts to develop model projects for the establishment of private forest plantations in the Eastern and Southern regions of the Republic. Currently, 4 standard projects for the creation of private forest plantations of poplar, birch, willow, and spruce for the East Kazakhstan region have been drafted. An overview is presented for the Southern region, which includes a description and rationale for the objectives of forest plantations and the selection of major species;
- To implement Article 8 of the Land Code of Kazakhstan for 7 pilot districts of Almaty and Zhetysu regions the schemes of functional zoning, covering a total area of **5,732,439 ha have been developed and approved**. The functional zones of productive landscapes for agriculture, forestry, hunting, tourism, and recreation are defined. Sustainable land use measures have been developed for each zone. Experts have prepared **more than 200 thematic database maps**, which contain information on climate, socio-economic conditions, demography, agriculture, biodiversity of the pilot areas. The integral assessment identified potential ecological corridors for the conservation of habitats and migration routes of key animal species (gazelle, snow

leopard, Turkestan lynx, brown bear), with a total area of **684,160 ha**. Workshops with stakeholders were held in the district centers to coordinate the Zoning Schemes and explain the rules and importance of functional zoning. The schemes have been approved by the district akimats. In April 2022 the Zoning Schemes were presented at the regional level in Taldykorgan (regional center) with the broad participation of key local partners. 685,025 people, including 331,459 men and 326,566 women, living in the 7 pilot areas benefited indirectly from the landscape planning approaches.

- To improve the condition of grazing on the example of 4 "Koksaray", "Kaskasu", "Belkaragai" and "Sumbe" pilot projects for the introduction of a sustainable system of grazing turnover and grazing of distant cattle were implemented. Grazing management plans were developed and approved, and Public Grazing Councils consisting of local residents, farmers and district akims were established in each rural district. To reduce the load on the grazing lands, the decisions of the Public Councils organized the withdrawal of more than 7000 conditional cattle to the distant summer grazing lands (zhailau). As **a result, 81,680 ha of grazing lands are covered by sustainable management**, of which 16,945 ha are near rural areas and 64,736 ha of forest (driving) grazing lands. There is great emphasis on improving the knowledge of rural residents in grazing management. Each district held outreach sessions and 144 people were informed, 94 men and 50 women. In total, **15,834 rural residents** of the rural districts of Belkaragai, Sumbe, Koksarai and Kaskasu, 7,722 men and 8,112 women, indirectly benefited from the implementation of sustainable grazing management activities. According to the results of visual monitoring conducted by Kazakh Research Institute of Cattle Breeding and Forage Production, all pilot plots show a decrease in the degree of vegetation and soil degradation by 3-7% of the baseline condition.
- Resource studies to assess 8 species of economically valuable medicinal plant species to determine the operational and biological stock, as well as to develop practical recommendations for their sustainable use were carried out on the territory of 10 forest conservation institutions of the East Kazakhstan region. In addition, an ecological assessment of the current state of 5 rare plant species was carried out with recommendations for their preservation. An Illustrated Catalogue of Medicinal Plants of the Kazakhstan Altai has been developed;
- Activities on the equipping of 3 pilot routes of tourist routes in Katon-Karagai, Sairam-Ugam and Kolsai Lakes National Parks, considering the features of the terrain and its corporate identity were carried out. The routes are equipped with entrance panels, information signs, viewing platforms, recreation areas, and thematic posters containing key information about the biodiversity of the pilot PAs. In November, there was a presentation of tourist routes in the Katon-Karagai national nature park and the Kolsai Lakes National Parks with the participation of the Deputy Minister of Ecology, Geologists, Forestry and Wildlife Committee management, PAs, and leading tour operators. The demonstration arrangement of alternative tourist routes is designed to reduce the current recreational pressure on popular destinations in National Parks;
- A pilot project to develop and implement an additional environmental education programme has been implemented in 3 regions, covering about 100 schools in the East Kazakhstan,

Turkestan and Almaty regions. In 6 pilot schools, environmental classrooms were equipped with projectors, furniture, laptops and cameras, and a book collection. 60 digital lessons-presentations in Kazakh and Russian for 6-8 grades with visual materials on flora and fauna, natural ecosystems of 3 pilot regions: the Northern Tien Shan and Zhetysay Alatau, the Western Tien Shan and Kazakh Altai were developed. Each lesson has a methodological guide for teachers. 137 teachers of natural sciences have been trained, 96 of them women in this programme;

- The implementation of the II-th stage of the Eco-Damu Lending Programme is continuing. During the report period by the Fund for Financial Support of Agriculture JSC has financed 39 business projects to the amount of 483.4 thousand US dollars. of which 14 projects are considered as for women. Distribution: 10 projects on the creation of guest houses (71,0 mln KZT), 10 projects on poultry farming (61,0 mln KZT), 9 projects on bee keeping (51,0 mln KZT), 2 projects on the sewing of national clothes (10,0 mln KZT), 2 projects on souvenir production (12,0 mln KZT), 4 projects on grazing rehabilitation (17.0 mln KZT) and 2 projects on fruit tree seedlings cultivation (KZT 5.0 mln). The largest disbursement of credit funds was made in Almaty, Akmola, Karaganda, Kyzylorda regions.". According to the interim deliverables of the Programme, **43 jobs have been opened, of which 23 jobs are considered as for women.** In July-August 2023, a joint monitoring of funded projects was carried out, which showed the sustainability of projects;
- Laptop (6 pcs), MS Office 2021 software (6 licenses), tablets (10 pcs) and DJI Matrice 300 RT industrial drone with a ZL1 laser sensor (1 pc), and PP Terra Pro Overseas Permanent software (3 licenses) were procured and handed over to the balance to strengthen the material and technical equipment of the system of monitoring and conservation of biodiversity in the project areas in the Kazakh forestry enterprise State Enterprise.
- On September 5-7 and October 25-28, training courses on piloting a drone, as well as on the use of air-laser scanning and aerial photography data for the purposes of inventory, accounting and forest taxation were held in Almaty for employees of the Kazakh Forestry Enterprise.

Component 3. International cooperation and knowledge management

- On June 6-8, 2022, a workshop was held in Almaty on the exchange of experience between SMART specialists of Kazakhstan based on the results of the implementation of the SMART patrol and monitoring system in 8 pilot environmental institutions, as well as on the formation of a community of SMART specialists in order to expand the coverage of the implementation of the SMART system in the field of nature conservation and monitoring;
- Employees of pilot 7 PAs took part in regional seminars on the exchange of experience between SMART specialists of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, which took place on October 26-28 in Tashkent, as well as on November 22-24 in Almaty;
- work has been carried out on a comprehensive evaluation of habitats, assessment of the state of the Kazakh snow leopard population. Field studies were conducted in 2022. Field expeditions were conducted on the territory of the Northern, Central, and Western Tien Shan. Various methodological techniques were used to collect field accounting data: visual observations,

tracking animal tracks, registration of traces of vital activity and marking activity of the snow leopard. Photo traps were used as the most promising remote method of tracking snow leopard. An approach using spatial cells (grids) was used to map the habitats of the snow leopard. Pilot PAs presented a report on the functioning of photo for the study of wild animals with the presented analysis and cartographic data;

- based on the data on the registration of snow leopards on the territory of Kazakhstan, models of the distribution of this rare species have been created not only within the mountainous regions of the country, but also the mountain ranges of neighboring countries;
- a multiscale SDM model of snow leopard distribution has been created and the assessment of the quality of the species' habitats by the degree of suitability – high, medium and low. The ways of possible settlement and migration of the snow leopard are modeled both in the redistribution of Kazakhstan and in neighboring countries.
- to determine the migration routes of the snow leopard, analyze and minimize threats, improve the effectiveness of conservation measures for this species in Kazakhstan, and improve the monitoring methodology, the Project continued work on satellite tagging of the snow leopard. In this regard, telemetry collars (6 units) for the snow leopard of Vectronic Aerospace (Germany), the VERTEX Lite Collar model, as well as equipment for catching the leopard and preparations for its immobilization were procured;
- In 2022, a cryobank of snow leopard germplasm was created. During this work, fibroblasts were isolated from skin explants of three individuals (two males and one female) and primary *in vitro* somatic cell cultures were obtained. Experimental studies have been initiated to study the survival of snow leopard somatic cells after cryopreservation (*ex situ in vitro* preservation). Also, serological studies have been initiated from selected animal blood samples to diagnose possible diseases of the snow leopard by studying the interaction of antigens with antibodies in blood serum;
- the International Meeting, at the Seventh Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEP) was attended. The delegation of Kazakhstan was represented by the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Ms. A. Shalabekova, with the participation of the Acting UNDP Resident Representative in Kazakhstan, Mr. S. Khodjimotov, Head of the UNDP EEU K. Kylychev and the project staff T. Kerteshev and A. Omarbekova, the project executors A. Grachyov. The delegation presented reports on the current state of the snow leopard population, proposed new ways of monitoring;
- A national report on the results of work on the snow leopard in Kazakhstan for 2021 has been prepared, which outlines all the work done on the snow leopard in Kazakhstan by the authorized body, scientific institutes, international agencies, public organizations and private structures;
- A large-scale information campaign was held for the International Snow Leopard Day in the form of a joint action with the Barys hockey club:

- the "Kar barysyn birge saktayik!" contest of children's drawings in pilot PAs. All participants of the contest received certificates from the organizers, the winners received memorable prizes the "4 tons of sand" information

Information support of the Project activities:

- In 2022, the activities of the UNDP-GEF Project were covered through print and digital media, television and social media. More than 1,000 informational publications were published in the media.
- The deliverables of the Project on the implementation of the SMART patrol and monitoring system, the use of a drone for the purposes of inventory, accounting and forest taxation, virtual tours of 5 PAs, the use of photo traps and satellite telemetry data in animal monitoring were shown on December 14, 2022 in Astana at the international Digital by default for People and the Planet UNDP conference.
- On November 25, 2022, the "Tabigatka kulak sal" updated ecological route (Hear Nature) in the Saty gorge was opened in the Kolsai Lakes National Parks park with the support of UNDP in Kazakhstan with the participation of Vice-Minister of Ecology A. L. Shalabekova L., Deputy Chairman of the FWC of MNE of RK D.G. Turgambayeva, representatives of the UNDP, pilot PAs of the Almaty region, the Tourism Department of the Almaty region, tour operators, the media. The participants got acquainted with the Concept and deliverables of the tour route arrangement: entrance group, information signs, observation deck, recreation areas, thematic full houses (mounts). Extensive media coverage of this event was carried out.
- in 2022, the following publications of the Project were published:
 - "Rural women's businesses – first steps to coming of age" information collection. About the deliverables of the implementation of the II stage of the Eco-Damu Lending Programme, in Kazakh and Russian;
 - "On comprehensive measures for integrated grazing management to reduce threats to forest ecosystems of Altai, Western Tien Shan, floodplains of the Sharyn and Syrdarya rivers, deliverables of pilot projects" publication, in Kazakh and Russian;
 - "Professional development programme for employees of state forestry institutions of Kazakhstan" publication in Russian.

I. Project Risks and Issues

At the stage of preparation of the Project Document, the risks were identified. During the report period, risks are evaluated and measures are taken to mitigate them. Project risk monitoring is carried out on a quarterly basis or at the request of the GEF. During the report period, the risks were evaluated and measures were taken to mitigate them. Below we note the key risks faced by the project during the reporting period.

#	Project Risk	Actions taken
1	Changes in government policy priorities related to sustainable forestry development	Preventive: Within the project activities on identification of HCVF are carried out on the basis of 8 pilot forestry institutions. The HCVF are the basis for future certification of forest management in Kazakhstan. To improve forest planning and management system for the first time in Kazakhstan, a Forest Institutional Management Plan is being developed. Thematic workshops and experience exchange through internships for decision makers are a priority for future project activities. Alleviative: Holding consultative meetings with decision-makers on the need to replace the policy on sustainable forest management. Organization of round tables with the participation of representatives of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, the Prime Minister's Office and other interested structures represented by the Ministries of Environment, Economy, Finance.
2	Institutional government duty-bearers related to the management of forest ecosystems do not have the capacity to meet their obligations. Rights holders do not have a complete package of knowledge about their rights and capabilities	The project worked closely with all stakeholders to support government natural resource management authorities and institutions to meet their obligations, and with resource user rights holders to claim their rights. This will be accomplished through multiple stakeholder consultation sessions during all relevant aspects of the project to ensure that all parties are aware of and understand the relevant obligations and rights.
3	Impact of project activities, land use and resource use changes on key habitats / sensitive areas of biodiversity (e.g. different categories of protected areas) and livelihoods.	The project works to involve resource users / beneficiaries in traditional activities (grazing, haymaking, picking berries / herbs and the development of ecotourism) at protected areas territories
4	The Project involves plantation development and reforestation (harvesting of natural forests isn't involved)	The project team will work with government authorities and stakeholders (partner state forestry enterprises) to create conditions for afforestation of valuable local species.
5	Project possibly result in economic displacement. Project possibly affect land tenure arrangements and/or community-based property rights.	The project improved the environmental and social qualities of the areas where new protected areas are created to minimize the risk of negative social and environmental consequences.

6	<p>Mountain ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. Climate change could lead to ecosystem impacts that negatively influence the status of biodiversity and the sustainability of forest ecosystems, despite project efforts.</p>	<p>Preventive: Considering that mountain forests are vulnerable to the effects of climate change and therefore prone to forest fires. In order to reduce this risk, the Project has provided technical support to pilot PAs and leskhoz in the purchase of firefighting equipment and supplies: purchased 635 portable radios, 22 quadcopters (drones) with additional accessories, 16 patrol vehicles UAZ Patriot, 4 small forest patrol (forest fire) systems, 20 sets of firefighting clothing, 3 quad bikes and others. The project developed a methodological guide for forest fire monitoring based on remote sensing data. By the end of the project, it is envisaged to continue training of the key beneficiaries in remote forest fire monitoring. Recommendations on improvement of norms and regulations for wildfires were elaborated. By the end of the project, it is foreseen to develop a Strategy on fire protection of forests (riparian, saxaul and mountain forests) and its dissemination at the national level.</p> <p>Alleviative: Climate change in mountain systems leads to intensive melting of glaciers and loss of biodiversity as a result of changing natural conditions. Conducting consultative meetings and negotiations with the management of the authorized body and other interested partners on strengthening the conservation of mountain ecosystems and the development of adaptation measures to climate change.</p>
7	<p>Restrictions are implemented by the Government in relation to Covid-19</p>	<p>Alleviative: The government of Kazakhstan imposed restrictions on the non-proliferation of pandemic COVID-19 in 2020-2021. To continue the work on capacity building of staff of pilot PAs and other beneficiaries a system was developed, and a number of workshops and trainings were conducted in online format. The software "FinPlan" for the preparation of the budget application to the Management Plans has been developed. It is planned to develop standard training modules including blocks of online / remote training for the staff of protected areas in 7 areas. Information activities with schools, on the formation of environmental culture of young people were conducted. In order to develop tourism in PAs and raise awareness about the importance of the territory continues to develop virtual tours in 5 pilot PAs, which will provide information to stakeholders and target groups. Also trainings and refresher courses for employees of pilot PAs and forest farms on forest monitoring based on remote sensing data were conducted.</p>

8	Biodiversity science and conservation community continue to ignore/underestimate the participatory approaches in planning the landscapes and continue to use formal social surveys as a key tool for community engagement.	Preventive: The project actively involves all stakeholders, including the local population, in the planning and implementation of project activities at all stages. The project envisages development of the system of public participation in making management decisions in SPNA through local coordination councils. Public Councils have been established and are functioning in the pilot PAs and include representatives of local executive bodies, nature users and NGOs. Based on international experience and practice, the structure of the PA management plan has been modified and amended, in particular, the participation of stakeholders in the assessment of the effectiveness of the management plan for the previous 5-year period. This approach will identify gaps and barriers, priority areas and activities in the long term, which will improve the activities and management of PAs, taking into account the interests of all stakeholders. A key condition of landscape planning is the involvement of local communities and authorities at all stages in the discussion of current issues related to land-forest-water use and the development of joint recommendations for their solution. Alleviative: Wide awareness of all stakeholders about the activities of PAs and the work of the Coordinating Councils of PAs will stimulate the involvement of local communities in the planning and management of landscapes. Socio-economic situation of the pilot regions and other relevant issues related to the identification of threats, barriers are taken into account in the analysis of the effectiveness of the Management Plan and in the development of the Management Plan for the next 5-year period.
9	Data deficiencies to complete the ecosystem services quantification and economic valuation research may undermine the quality of the final products related to species and habitats modeling.	Alleviative: Prepare and make proposals to the draft Concept for the transition of the RK to a Green Economy regarding the consideration of the economic valuation of ecosystem services as the basis of natural capital. To prepare recommendations for the economic valuation of ecosystem services of forest ecosystems and PAs by 2030.
10	Negative impact of possible consequences of climate change on status of biodiversity and the sustainability of forest ecosystems.	The project team works with all partners and stakeholders to apply the best available climate change impact prediction data for forest regions of Kazakhstan and will ensure that that all project activities and plans take into account the potential future climate impacts. The project has developed a methodology for monitoring climate change for tree species in Kazakhstan
11	When establishing protected areas, there is always a possibility that this process will result in some modification to the enjoyment of human rights of individuals living near or otherwise using territory to be included in the protected area.	The project works closely with all stakeholders through meetings, public hearings, roundtables In any cases where negative impacts are possible, mitigation and compensation measures will be developed and implemented. The project implements Eco-Damu Loan Program to financially support local residents living near PAs. The program provides preferential loans for the development of alternative activities: beekeeping, ecotourism, souvenir workshops, etc.

II. Gender Related Activities

The project continues to actively implement measures to promote gender issues in the project areas, pays attention to supporting women's initiatives and raising the level of knowledge of rural women. A special achievement during the report period can be noted the financial support provided to rural women within the framework of the Eco-Damu Lending Programme. Thus, **14**

rural women were able to receive preferential loans with a low interest rate (6%) for a total amount of more than 197,000 US dollars for the implementation of their business projects (guest house, beekeeping, sewing workshops, etc.) On-site monitoring showed the success and sustainability of these projects. Support for the development of women's businesses has allowed women, sometimes in difficult life situations, to provide a permanent income for their family, develop their skills and knowledge, as well as contribute to the conservation of biodiversity through the development of alternative activities. According to the interim deliverables of the Programme, 43 jobs have been opened, of which **23 jobs are considered as for women**;

Women living in pilot areas often act as a locomotive in achieving some of the deliverables of the Project. In 4 rural districts (Belkaragai, Kaskasu, Koksarai, Sumbe) in 3 pilot regions of the country, the Project successfully implemented approaches to sustainable grazing management. The well-being of rural residents engaged in cattle farming directly depends on the ecological state of grazing lands, women are especially vulnerable in this matter since they account for the main work of caring for cattle. It was the broad participation of rural women in solving issues of effective grazing management through the established Public Grazing Councils that contributed to the withdrawal of most of the rural livestock to Zhailau and reduced the load on the grazing lands near rural areas. Women actively participated in all working meetings and training seminars (more than 30% of the total number of participants), expressed suggestions and needs in solving issues of reducing overgrazing. More than **8,000 women** living in 4 pilot rural districts received indirect benefits from project activities to improve grazing management;

In order to improve living conditions and access to electricity for employees of environmental institutions and their families living in remote cordons, 28 wind-solar panels with a capacity of 2 kW (13 PAs and 5 forestries) were purchased and installed. This allowed **20** women living in the forest cordons to get access to clean electricity and improve their living conditions.

III. Cross-Cutting Themes

The project focuses on strengthening intergovernmental cooperation on snow leopard conservation between the countries of Central Asia (leopard habitat countries). In 2022 the Project team participated in the Seventh Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Global Program for the conservation of the snow leopard and its ecosystems (GSLEP) in Bishkek. The Kazakhstan delegation was represented by the leadership of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources, the Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, UNDP in Kazakhstan. The delegation presented reports on the current state of the snow leopard population and proposed new ways of monitoring. In general, at the level of UNDP projects on the snow leopard in the countries of Central Asia there is an exchange of information on the number of snow leopards in the border protected areas.

IV. Lessons Learned

Despite the positive trends in achieving the target indicators, the acute peak of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020) had a significant impact on the delay of key project activities. In particular, with a delay of one year, measures have been launched to develop a plan and a feasibility study for the

creation of 5 new protected areas and sanctuaries. There also was a delay in initiating measures for the inventory of LCPs, the introduction of a management planning system in forestry enterprises and the development of private forest plantations.

There is a need to replicate successful project experience at the national level - landscape planning with the development of a methodological framework as well as activities to preserve the snow leopard in the border areas.

To achieve the final deliverables and indicators, the Project will need additional time. Taking into account the recommendations of the MTE (2020), the request of the executive agency of the Project and the decision of the Project Management Committee, a justification and a package of documents for the extension of the Project for a period of 18 months was prepared, which was sent for consideration to the Istanbul regional office of UNDP. On December 22, 2022, approval was received for the extension of the Project from the Policy and Programme Support Office (PPS)/ Global Policy Network UNDP until October 2024.

V. Conclusions and Way Forward

During the reporting year good progress has been made in the key areas and indicators of the project. With the expert support of the Project management plans for 14 pilot PAs were updated, which cover a new five-year period. The work on expansion of the network of PAs is continued, where the Project has focused on the preparation of technical documentation on the creation of new PAs, with a total area of more than 1.5 million ha. A series of public hearings were held in the pilot regions in order to inform the local population in order to agree on the clarified boundaries and areas of new PAs.

Four pilot pasture projects have been successfully implemented, improving the condition of more than 80.0 thousand hectares of pastures (paul and forest). Schemes of functional zoning for 7 districts were developed and approved, covering an area of more than 5.7 million hectares. With the participation of an international expert is successfully working to identify HCVF on the territory of 8 pilot leskhozoes, began work on developing a methodology for the development of forest management plans. Monitoring and inventory of forests of the Kazakh forestry enterprise was improved.

On the basis of 7 pilot PAs the SMART-patrolling system is successfully functioning. Thanks to the established system of monitoring the population of the snow leopard in the pilot PAs - positive dynamics of increasing the number of this species is observed. Continued work on satellite tagging of the snow leopard, a total of 3 individuals of the leopard were installed satellite collars, which allows tracking its migration routes and new habitats. The project continues to work on gender mainstreaming. Annual work plans are prepared with a mandatory gender perspective. Great attention is paid to the empowerment of women, increasing their capacity and supporting women's initiatives.

A special achievement during the reporting period is the financial support provided to 13 rural women under the "Eco-Damu" credit program, who were able to start their own businesses and earn a steady income.

On December 22, 2022 approval for the extension of the Project was obtained taking into account reallocation of the remaining activities and the budget for 18 months. Extension of the Project will allow to achieve the key indicators.

VI. Financial Status

The revised 2022 audited budget was \$1,269,771, with \$1,148,572 (90%) actually expended. A total of \$5,360,430 has been spent since the start of the Project, which is 66.5%. The balance of \$2,774,098.

The table shows information on the delivery budget SFM project by 2018-2022

	Approved budget	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Activity 1	2 547 067,0	147 238,4	509 931,9	362 183,5	165 560,67	250 348,31
71200		9 950,0	6 131,7	9 998,4	466,4	45 213,3
71300		3 199,5	32 385,5	2 192,5	13 685,6	40 172,4
71400		13 438,6	47 841,8	57 734,5	51 922,6	4 227,2
71500		6 627,4	46,2	2 576,7	4 219,7	23 521,0
71600		13 146,9	46 271,3	5 133,8	12 478,9	114 351,4
72100		49 007,7	134 769,2	30 863,4	27 477,8	11 064,8
72200		12 155,7	140 159,5	186 879,0	-	-
72300		-	110,7	26,9	-	2 385,3
72400		277,2	55 022,0	63 104,4	29 100,8	-
72800		22 593,9	-	-	10 459,4	132,7
74200		2 487,4	5 117,2	-	6 621,7	198,0
74500		109,0	54,4	122,2	599,6	8 826,8
75700		13 695,3	42 051,0	4 022,2	9 106,3	255,6
76100		549,8	-28,5	-470,4	-578,1	
Activity 2	4 017 000,0	74 835,6	754 307,8	492 662,6	651 037,8	674 415,83
71200			10 273,5	9 477,7	10 686,7	19 034,4
71300		9 786,0	67 706,9	47 317,5	57 889,1	46 223,1

71400		18 352,2	86 338,3	79 146,6	72 329,5	60 702,1
71500		1 270,0	18 038,8	24 382,3	17 904,5	19 966,0
71600		13 893,1	57 567,0	12 466,3	11 969,3	24 483,8
72100		9 360,2	236 167,8	145 995,1	302 917,9	448 993,8
72200		28,9	106 208,3	158 115,8	96 722,4	49 640,7
72300		-	-	2 287,2	14 980,8	-
72400		125,1	31 697,8	175,3	11 666,2	407,3
72800		-	-	565,4	-	-
74200		-	13 076,3	5 368,4	3 194,2	2 538,7
74500		-	105,4	174,9	542,9	325,0
75700		22 045,2	127 146,3	7 763,7	50 515,7	1 135,5
76100		-25,1	-18,6	-573,6	-281,3	965,3
Activity 3	1 120 865,0	54 078,9	340 241,5	128 980,6	219 764,1	158 964,41
71200		-	9 800,0	8 123,7	17 720,0	-
71300		-	10 996,2	14 095,0	6 868,8	19 456,7
71400		18 004,5	46 715,1	50 183,3	52 419,9	22 346,7
71500				2 500,9	5 200,7	4 933,9
71600		5 357,0	20 978,2	9,6	4 721,7	9 720,3
72100		15 024,8	107 497,8	45 119,4	66 770,0	72 599,7
72200		-	9 483,8	1 784,0	31 389,8	4 837,4
72300		-	8 392,7	-	-	-
72400		345,7	94 891,4	246,6	18 958,1	13 928,0
74200		2 683,4	9 318,8	6 153,0	10 953,4	8 776,9
74500		76,1	19,5	48,6	5 084,9	39,6
75700		12 637,2	22 093,5	716,5	-	184,2
76100		-49,9	54,4	-	-323,2	2 141,0
Activity 4	384 246,0	45 007,7	77 343,2	56 119,8	46 221,7	36 366,34
71400		22 282,9	30 896,0	17 341,2	29 226,8	14 762,1

71600		1 056,1	1 757,0	-	-	7 438,6
72100		-	-	-	-	762,3
73100		8 667,6	22 493,7	26 826,1	9 490,1	6 919,5
74500		13 001,1	22 196,5	11 952,5	7 534,1	6 533,6
76100		-	0,0	-	-29,2	-49,7
73500						0,0

Ms. Assel Nurbekova,
Programme analyst EE Unit

DocuSigned by:

Assel Nurbekova

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Annex 1

Progress of Project indicators, according to PIR report, as of 30.06.2022

Output indicators	Baseline Level	End of project target level	Data source	Cumulative progress since project start
Area of critical ecosystems with improved management, including tugai, saxaul, and mountain forests, and associated grasslands	N/A (zero hectares improved)	9,127,071 hectares	<p>Project reports and documentation; Successful completion of project activities for relevant project components, as verified by the MTR and TE.</p> <p>GEF-6 Corporate Results Indicator 1: <i>“Improved management of landscapes and seascapes covering 300 million hectares”</i></p>	<p>4,869,922.2 ha</p> <p>Indicator is on track. As of today, 53% of the end of project target level has been achieved.</p> <p>During the reporting period, cumulative progress of 729,840 hectare was achieved due to the improved management of rangelands and ecological corridors identified through the functional zoning of pilot areas (functional land use plans/zoning schemes developed for the area of 5,732,439 hectares).</p> <p>(A) Revision of the current structure of Protected Natural Areas Management Plans, along with preparation of methodological recommendations for their development were completed.</p> <p>The structure of the new Management Plan and Methodology were approved by the Scientific and Technical Council (STC) of the Forestry and Wildlife Committee and reflected in the Minutes of this STC. (Evidence 1-1 Minutes on approval of the revised structure, as of 28.09.2021).</p> <p>(B) Management Plans were developed for 14 pilot protected areas and 11 Nature Reserves according to the revised structure and submitted to the STC of the Forestry and Wildlife Committee for review.</p>

				<p>(C) Activities to implement stage 2 to expand the ecological network in the 2 project areas "Western Tien-Shan" and "Northern and Central Tien-Shan" are underway and include technical and economic survey, land management work, and local people's awareness. The estimated area coverage of future protected areas is more than 1.7 million ha. Activities to introduce amendments to documents to expand existing protected areas based on the results of public hearings and agreements to redraw boundaries and economic calculations with local executive bodies and other stakeholders are underway.</p> <p>Information source: draft scientific justifications for the establishment/expansion of 4 protected areas.</p> <p>(D) The following activities on functional zoning, sustainable pasture management, development of management plans, identification and zoning of HCVF were implemented:</p> <p>1) functional zoning schemes of 7 pilot districts of Almaty region on a total area of 5,732,439 hectares developed and approved at the local level. As part of this activity, 4 ecologic corridors were identified to protect the habitats and migration routes of key animal species on a total area of 648,160 hectares. (Evidence 1-3. Maps of functional zoning of pilot regions).</p> <p>2) The management of 81,680 hectares of rangeland (village and remote pastures) was improved through the implementation of 4 pilot sustainable grazing projects with the development and approval of grazing management plans. The carrying capacity rate and acceptable rotational grazing schemes were established. Grazing and irrigation infrastructure was improved in the pilot areas, and 4 public grazing councils were</p>
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				<p>established, 144 pasture users (94 men and 50 women) improved their skills.</p> <p>3) Activities on identification and zoning of HCVF and key biodiversity spots continued on total area of 2,348,419 hectares, covering the territory of 8 pilot forestry enterprises in Almaty, Zhetysu and East Kazakhstan regions.</p> <p>A practical guide for the identification and evaluation of HCVFs was prepared. HCVFs were preliminarily identified within pilot forest enterprises and draft maps prepared. Field visits to verify identified HCVFs will take place in July-August 2022.</p>
Forest area in Kazakhstan under indirectly improved management	N/A (zero hectares indirectly improved)	Forests managed by 120 forestry entities = 12,652,400 ha of forest landscapes	Project reports and documentation; Successful completion of project activities for relevant project components, as verified by the MTR and TE	<p>0+</p> <p>Indicator is in progress and on track. The project continues to actively move towards achieving the target to improve forest management at the national level.</p> <p>Project activities are focused on improving the regulatory framework, creating a basis for medium-term forest planning (Forest Management Plans) and improving the national forest inventory and monitoring system.</p> <p>All implemented activities will contribute to the achievement of the target for improved management of 120 forest institutions.</p> <p>During the reporting period the following activities were implemented to improve the forest management system:</p> <p>(A) In 2022, recommendations to improve the current regulatory documents governing the issues of forest reproduction and afforestation, forest protection were prepared.</p> <p>The recommendations include:</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - practical application of new techniques for creating forest crops; - revision of standards on establishment and preservation of forest crops; - application of modern techniques and equipment for effective execution of complex measures on forest reproduction and afforestation, forests protection from pests and diseases; - application of modern methods for forest pathology monitoring, and of biological methods for forest protection. <p>(Evidence 2-1. Recommendations on forest reproduction and forest protection).</p> <p>(B) Assessment of the existing system of forest management, forest inventory and monitoring in Kazakhstan, conducted by the International Forestry Expert, recommended improving the efficiency of the system by applying international experience.</p> <p>(Evidence 2-2. Recommendations of International Forestry Expert).</p> <p>Recommendations were presented and discussed with stakeholders (forest enterprises, Kazlesproekt, regional forestry departments, territorial forestry inspectorates, scientific institutions) and submitted to the Forestry and Wildlife Committee.</p> <p>(C) Currently, forestry enterprises have no medium-term planning and are still guided by the materials of the forest inventory, which is conducted once every 10 years. This is relevant to the entire system of 120 forestry entities in Kazakhstan.</p> <p>The lack of strategic planning tools does not allow forest enterprises to manage their areas more effectively.</p>
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				<p>Therefore, the project supports the development of pilot management plans for forestry enterprises. Considering the novelty and scope of the work, the activity will be carried out in 2 phases: 1) development of the methodology and structure of the management plans, 2) approval in 2 pilot forest farms through the elaboration of their plans.</p> <p>As part of phase 1, an international expert was engaged and an analysis of international best practices for developing forest management plans in the forest sector, taking into account the HCVF approach, was conducted, and a first draft of the management plan structure was prepared.</p> <p>The Stage 2 will require additional time and expertise to allow for the full use of the existing experience on SFM in Kazakhstan to develop the first high quality Management Plans for forestry enterprises in a participatory manner.</p> <p>(D) For the first time in Kazakhstan a genetic seed bank of most valuable tree species was established under the Republican Forest Breeding and Seed Center.</p> <p>The Project provided refrigeratory equipment for the long- and short-term seed storage.</p> <p>The seed bank is key for the long-term storage of 18 valuable forest forming species. The annual capacity of the bank is 4,000 kg of seeds.</p> <p>In 2022, the Government has allocated USD 52,000 for the procurement of laboratory equipment.</p>
# direct project beneficiaries b. # of PA staff with enhanced individual capacity	N/A (zero beneficiaries)	a. Total: ~41,000 : b. PA staff: >2,000 PA staff with enhanced capacity c. Forestry staff: 457 leskhoz staff	Number of staff employed at PAs targeted by the project	a. Total: 2,482 (cumulative progress over 4,5 years). b. PAs employees: 1,402 employees (1,006 men and 396 women) with improved capacity or 70% of EoP target. c. State Forestry Department employees: 537 employees (429 men and 108 women) or 117% of EoP target.

				<p>c. A training module for forest workers (including 18 training modules) was tested through a series of workshops in October-December 2021. As a result, 60 employees from 8 forest enterprises were trained, where 52 men and 8 women. In addition, 16 trainers were additionally trained under the Capacity Building Program for Forestry Workers.</p> <p>In March-April 2022, 44 employees of Ridder and Karadala forest enterprises, where 38 men and 6 women, improved their knowledge on billing schemes for ecosystem services.</p> <p>d. In April-May 2022, 144 villagers (94 men and 50 women) from pilot regions Belkaragai, Koksarai, Kaskasu and Sumbe increased their knowledge on sustainable pasture management.</p> <p>In April 2022, 146 residents (134 men and 14 women) from 7 pilot districts of Almaty region (Kegen, Eskeldy Raiymbek, Panfilov, Uygur, Enbekshikazakh, Kerbulak) improved their knowledge on functional zoning and landscape planning.</p> <p>In November 2021, 9 rural women entrepreneurs from Katon-Karagai district (East Kazakhstan region) improved their knowledge and practical skills in public catering and services.</p> <p>The Project also trained 40 hunting providers (36 men and 4 women) on hunting management, regulatory issues, etc.</p>
Population trends for globally significant species, such as snow leopard, argali, goitered gazelle, and other threatened species within the	Please see GEF-6 BD Tracking Tool METT scorecards for all PAs, cells C38 and C39	Flora: Non-deterioration of baseline status Fauna: Increase relative to baseline	Annual PA flora and fauna monitoring, as summarized in METT scorecards cells C38 and C39	Indicator is in progress and on track. Over 4 years of the Project implementation no deviation of numerical data for globally significant species from the baseline was observed. Every year the Project registers a positive dynamics of the population trends based on reliable accounting data of pilot PAs.

<p>expanded target PA estate:</p> <p>Alpine forest and associated ecosystems, flora:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Picea schrenkiana - 65,321 - Malus sieversii - 5,100 - Malus niedzwetzkyana - no data - Juniperus sp. (turkeстана, semiglobosa, seravschanica) - 7,572 - Betula tianschanika - 1,522 - Populus tremula L. - 4,788 - Abies siberica - 76,859 - Crataegus turkestanica - 1,100 - Picea obovata - 18,580 <p>Alpine forest and associated ecosystems, fauna:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uncia uncia - 110-130 - Ursus arctos (incl. ssp isabellinus) - 507 - Ovis ammon ssp (karelini, nigrimontana) - 685 - Capra sibirica - 6,039 - Cervus elaphus - 3,306 - Capreolus pygargus - 7,072 - Canis lupus - 561 				<p>There is a positive trend of changes in the number of indicator species and ecosystems' conditions. Most species' indicators are remaining at the medium-term level, for some globally important species an increase was observed:</p> <p>Mountain forests and their ecosystems, flora:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asian wild apple (Malus sieversii) - 6.945 ha (increase of 1.845 ha (36.1%) over baseline) - Niedzwetzky apple (Malus niedzwetzkyana)- 6.916 ha (no data previously) - Juniper (Juniperus sp. (turkeстана, semiglobosa, seravschanica)) - 21,850 ha (increase of 14,278 ha over baseline) - Siberian spruce (Picea obovata) - 19,080 ha (increase by 500 ha (2.6%) over baseline) <p>Mountain forests and their ecosystems, fauna:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Snow leopard (Uncia uncia), 140-180 (increased from 126); - Siberian ibex (Capra sibirica), 7,864 (increase of 1,825 animals (30%) against baseline) - Siberian roe deer (Capreolus pygargus), 10,707 (increase of 3,635 animals (51%) against baseline); - Wolf (Canis lupus), 1,351 (increase of 790 animals (140%) against baseline) <p>Coastal (riparian) forests and their ecosystems, flora:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blue poplar (Populus pruinosa) - 172 ha; - Elm (Ulmus sp.) - 280 ha; - Sogdian ash (Fraxinus sogdiana) - 1474 ha; - Russian olive (Elaeagnus oxycarpa) - 54 ha; - French tamarix (Tamarix ramosissima) - 801 ha <p>Coastal (riparian) forests and their ecosystems, fauna:</p>
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<p>- Marmota sp. (baibacina, caudate, menzbieri)</p> <p>Floodplain (tugai) forest and associated ecosystems, flora:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Populus pruinosa - Ulmus sp. - Fraxinus sogdiana - Elaeagnus oxycarpa - Tamarix ramosissima <p>Floodplain (tugai) forest and associated ecosystems, fauna:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capreolus pygargus - Sus scrofa - Cervus elaphus bactrianus - Hemiechinus auritus - Columba eversmanni - Falco cherrug - Aegypius monachus <p>Saxaul forest and associated ecosystems, flora:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Populus pruinosa <p>Schrenk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaeagnus oxycarpa - Haloxylon aphyllum, H. persicum 	<p>- Marmota sp. (baibacina, caudate, menzbieri) – 21,045</p> <p>Floodplain (tugai) forest and associated ecosystems, flora:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Populus pruinosa - 172 - Ulmus sp. - 280 - Fraxinus sogdiana - 1474 - Elaeagnus oxycarpa - unknown - Tamarix ramosissima - unknown <p>Floodplain (tugai) forest and associated ecosystems, fauna:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capreolus pygargus - >68 - Sus scrofa - >241 - Cervus elaphus bactrianus - 126 - Hemiechinus auritus - unknown - Columba eversmanni - >518 - Falco cherrug - 24 - Aegypius monachus - 4 <p>Saxaul forest and associated ecosystems, flora:</p>			<p>- Boar (Sus scrofa) - 622 individuals (158 % increase against baseline);</p> <p>- Bukharian deer (Cervus elaphus bactrianus), 191 heads (51.6% increase against baseline);</p> <p>- Brown Pigeon (Columba eversmanni), 946 (increase of 82.6% over baseline);</p> <p>- Black vulture (Aegypius monachus), 24 (population increased 6 times over baseline).</p> <p>Saxaul forests and their ecosystems, fauna:</p> <p>- Roe deer (Capreolus capreolus), 171 heads.</p> <p>As a result of forestry activities in pilot protected areas of Turkestan region (Aksu-Zhabagly Reserve, Karatau reserve, Sairam-Ugam National Park) and Almaty region, Asian wild apple (Malus sieversii) increased by 36.1 %.</p> <p>The data on vegetation areas of Niedzwetzky apple (Malus niedzwetzkyana) and Juniper (Juniperus sp. (turkestanica, semiglobosa, seravschanica) have been clarified. Vegetation areas of Siberian spruce (Picea obovata) have been increased by 2.6%.</p> <p>Qualification improvement trainings, upgrading the material and technical base, introduction of smart technology and drones, and the use of camera traps and satellite telemetry in the target PA estate allowed to improve the quality of biodiversity monitoring, collection and data updating on number of rare, endangered and indicator species.</p> <p>For example, the number of snow leopard was clarified for a reporting period and is 140-180 individuals; the population of Siberian ibex increased by 30%, Siberian roe deer and Bukhara deer - more than 2 times, wolf and wild boar - 1.5 times, number of brown pigeons increased by 82.6%, number of black vulture increased by 6 times over baseline.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Berberis iliensis M. Pop - Lonicera iliensis Pojark - Tamarix ramosissima <p>Saxaul forest and associated ecosystems, fauna:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gazella subgutturosa - Capreolus capreolus - Aquila rapax - Aquila chrysaetos - Lepus tolai 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Populus pruinosa Schrenk - unknown - Elaeagnus oxycarpa - unknown - Haloxylon aphyllum, H. persicum - >447 - Berberis iliensis M. Pop - unknown - Lonicera iliensis Pojark - unknown - Tamarix ramosissima - unknown <p>Saxaul forest and associated ecosystems, fauna:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gazella subgutturosa - 161 - Capreolus capreolus - unknown - Aquila rapax - 7 - Aquila chrysaetos - 16 - Lepus tolai - 472 			<p>(Evidence 4-1. Report on forest management in Almaty, East Kazakhstan, and Turkestan regions.</p> <p>Evidence 4-2. Data from wildlife counts by oblast</p> <p>.</p>
5. Incremental area under conservation management through establishment of new PAs	N/A (only existing PAs)	1,729,485 ha net new hectares under protection	Area of newly established PAs, according to government approval decree documents, as reported in annual PIR, and verified by MTR and TE	Indicator is in progress and on track. As noted by the MTR, the process of creation of new PAs by the Government of Kazakhstan is beyond the control of the project, and the means of verification for this target indicator have been changed (as reflected in Minor amendments section of the PIR). In this regard, the Project has concentrated its efforts on the development of the necessary scientific and feasibility studies for the expansion of existing PAs and the creation of new PAs. By the end of the project it is expected that the specified documents for the expansion / creation of new PAs with

				<p>a target coverage of more than 1.7 million hectares will be prepared and approved by the authorized body.</p> <p>Also,</p> <p>A) In the reporting period activities on the extension of ecological network on 2 project areas "Western Tien-Shan" and "Northern and Central Tien-Shan" continued. Development of feasibility studies, agreement of borders with all interested stakeholders were initiated. Awareness raising activities for local population and users of natural resources about the need to expand the areas of 3 PAs and creation of a regional park with an estimated coverage of 270,988.2 ha, of which</p> <p>1) expansion of PAs (196,188 ha):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kolsai Kolderi (110,000 ha) and Zhongar Alatau National Parks (64,091.4 ha) in the Northern and Central Tien-Shan; - Karatau Reserve (22,096.6 ha) in the Western Tien-Shan; <p>2) Creation of new protected areas (74,800 hectares):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Merke Regional Park (74,800.2 ha) in Zhambyl region (Western Tien-Shan). <p>During the public hearings, there were several recommendations on the proposed expansion boundaries considering the interests of all stakeholders. (Evidence 5-1. Agenda and list of participants of the Roundtables on expansion/creation of PAs).</p> <p>B) The activity on establishment of 5 new PAs was initiated where forests of high conservation value and habitats of globally significant species and snow leopard in project areas "Altay and Saur-Tarbagatay" and</p>
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				<p>"Northern and Central Tien-Shan" with an estimated coverage of 1,524,521 ha.</p> <p>A group of scientists and consultants completed a scientific survey of project areas to justify the establishment of 5 new PAs: Usek Reserve (≥197,684 ha); Koksus Reserve (≥586,796 ha); Ketmen Reserve (≥218,474 ha); Tereskey protected area (≥189,407 ha), Saur-Manyrak protected area (≥332,160 ha).</p> <p>Due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions and territorial and administrative division of the Almaty region, approval of projects on expansion and establishment of PAs faced complexities and were delayed.</p> <p>These efforts will continue provided the project is to be extended for 18 months as recommended by the mid-term evaluation and supported by the Project Board and IP.</p> <p>(Evidence 5-2. Minutes of meetings with akims of rural districts on creation of PAs in Almaty region).</p>
6. Forest management effectiveness	PA	<p>Baseline METT Scores:</p> <p>Alpine forest ecosystems:</p> <p>Almaty Zapovednik: 67</p> <p>Ile-Alatau NP: 66</p> <p>Kolsay Kolderi NP: 80</p> <p>Kolsay Kolderi NP Expansion: 24</p> <p>Zhongar Alatau NP: 59</p> <p>Zhongar Alatau NP Expansion: 27</p>	<p>30% improvement in score gap ((1 – METT value)*0.3) over baseline</p> <p>Target METT Scores:</p> <p>Alpine forest ecosystems:</p> <p>Almaty Zapovednik: 77</p> <p>Ile-Alatau NP: 76</p>	<p>GEF-6 BD Tracking Tool METT for each PA</p> <p>For the reporting period, METT scores for existing PAs remained at the midterm level, since the approval of establishment/expansion of boundaries of new PAs and development of biodiversity monitoring programs have not been finalized yet.</p> <p>The midterm METT scores of target forest protected areas are presented below.</p> <p>Alpine forest ecosystems:</p> <p>Almaty Zapovednik: 68;</p> <p>Ile-Alatau NP: 67;</p> <p>Kolsay Kolderi NP: 82;</p>

	<p>SW Zhongar Alatau ("Koksu Reserve") (proposed): 23 Sairam-Ugam NP: 71 Aksu-Jabagly Zapovednik: 81 Karatau NP: 81 Karatau NP Expansion: 17 Katon Karagay NP: 20 Markakol Reserve: 48 Zapadno-Altay Reserve: 77 Ketmen Reserve (proposed): 21 Terskey Reserve (proposed): 21 Merke Reserve (proposed): 18 Saur-Manrak Reserve (proposed): 17 Tarbagatai NP (proposed): 18</p> <p>Floodplain (tugai) and saxaul forest: Charyn Canyon NP: 68 Syr Darya-Turkestan Reserve: 73 Ile-Balkhash Reserve (proposed): 15 Ile Floodplain Reserve (proposed): 16</p>	<p>Kolsay Kolderi NP: 86 Kolsay Kolderi NP Expansion: 47 Zhongar Alatau NP: 71 Zhongar Alatau NP Expansion: 49 SW Zhongar Alatau ("Koksu Reserve") (proposed): 46 Sairam-Ugam NP: 80 Aksu-Jabagly Zapovednik: 87 Karatau NP: 87 Karatau NP Expansion: 42 Katon Karagay NP: 44 Markakol Reserve: 64 Zapadno-Altay Reserve: 84 Ketmen Reserve (proposed): 45 Terskey Reserve (proposed): 45 Merke Reserve (proposed): 43 Saur-Manrak Reserve (proposed): 42</p>		<p>Kolsay Kolderi NP Expansion (new): 24; Zhongar Alatau NP: 60; Zhongar Alatau NP Expansion (new): 27; SW Koksu Alatau ("Koksu Reserve") (new): 23; Sairam-Ugam NP: 73; Aksu-Zhabagly Zapovednik: 81; Karatau Reserve: 87; Karatau Reserve Expansion (new): 17; Katon Karagay NP: 63; Markakol Reserve: 48; Zapadno-Altay Reserve: 78; Ketmen Wildlife Sanctuary (new): 21; Terskey Conservation Area (new): 21; Merke Regional Nature Park (new): 18; Saur-Manrak Conservation Area (new): 17; Tarbagatay NP (new): 41 (130 %);</p> <p>Floodplain and saxaul forests: Charyn Canyon NP: 69; Syr Darya-Turkestan Regional Nature Park: 74; Ile-Balkhash State National Wildlife Sanctuary (new): 36 (140 %);</p> <p>Ussek Wildlife Sanctuary (new, instead of National Reserve "Ili River Delta"): 16</p> <p>To improve the management effectiveness of PAs and increase the efficiency of environmental organizations, the Project supported with the revision of management plans' structure for environmental institutions. The revised structure and Methodological Recommendations were accepted and approved by the Scientific and Technical Council of the authorized body.</p>
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		<p>Tarbagatai NP (proposed): 43</p> <p>Floodplain (tugai) and saxaul forest: Charyn Canyon NP: 78</p> <p>Syr Darya-Turkestan Reserve: 81</p> <p>Ile-Balkhash Reserve (proposed): 41</p> <p>Ile Floodplain Reserve (proposed): 41</p>		<p>Due to COVID-19 related restrictions, trainings, and capacity building activities for the pilot PAs were partially organized online. There were several trainings and workshops on development of Management Plans based on the revised structure by the sections and key values.</p> <p>“FinPlan” software implementation was completed in PAs of Kazakhstan, which is now used for budget planning and preparation of financial justifications for Management plans.</p> <p>Several local trainings were held on enforcement of SMART system and use of drones in PA field activities. The PA Coordination Councils established under the Project are allowing implementation of principles of joint management and involvement of stakeholders in biodiversity conservation issues and planning activities of environmental institutions.</p> <p>To improve the economic wellbeing of the local population and increase their interest in joint management of PAs, Phase II of the Eco-Damu Loan Program was launched and is underway.</p> <p>This Program allows residents living around PAs to implement business projects aimed at biodiversity conservation of the region, ecotourism development, handcrafting and souvenirs, tourism related services, etc.</p> <p>(Evidence 6-1. "Eco-Damu" Loan Program).</p>
7. Level of achievement of Kazakhstan's forest PAs in securing their biodiversity and other associated values	No forest PAs in Kazakhstan have achieved “Green List” certification	Submit a feasibility study to the government and support the government to	Presence of Green List assessment, as verified by MTR and TE	As recommended by the MTR, the indicator now focuses on a comprehensive analysis of the applicability of the IUCN Green List in Kazakhstan, on compliance of certification tool with the country's legislative frameworks and priorities of the authorized body to

		review and decide to proceed or not with the “Green List” standard		improve the management effectiveness of protected areas. Due to restrictions associated with COVID-19 the activity was postponed to 2023.
8. Change in area of sustainably managed forest in forest ecosystems bordering protected areas	N/A	>1,000,000 ha, as indicated by adoption of improved HCVF management practices in 6 targeted leskhozoes	GEF-6 SFM Tracking Tool cell C18	<p>Indicator is in progress and on track. The project expects to achieve and even exceed the EoP target and deliver approx. 2.3 million ha under improved HCVF management. This figure represents a total area of forests in 8 pilot leskhozoes, where the HCVF will be identified and measures for their sustainable management will be developed.</p> <p>Activities on identification and zoning of HCVF and key biodiversity points on a total area of 2,348,419 ha are continuing, covering the territory of 8 pilot forest enterprises in Almaty, Zhetysu and East Kazakhstan regions:</p> <p>Almaty region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bakanasskiy: 1,218,749 ha; - Narynkolskoye: 194,066 ha; - Karadaly (Uygur): 258,812 ha <p>Zhetysu region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zharkent: 170,832 ha; - Zhongarskiy: 3,677 hectares; <p>East Kazakhstan region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ridder: 304,922 ha; - Pikhtovsky: 80,601 ha; - Zaisansky: 88,760 ha. <p>The team of experts led by an international HCVF consultant has produced the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - practical guidelines on identification and assessment of HCVF for the RoK have been drafted.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - national interpretation of HCVF categories was made with identification of criteria for their formalization. 6 categories and 20 types of HCVF were identified for Kazakhstan, with development of their description; - Supporting data for the identification of HCVF at the pilot forestry enterprises have been compiled, analyzed and baseline was set; - Based on this input data, HCVFs were preliminarily identified by fixing their areas and drafting maps. - Field visits to pilot forestry enterprises will be performed in the 2nd half of 2022 to verify the identified HCVFs. <p>(Evidence 8-1. Draft Practice Manual and Methodology for Identification of HCVF. Evidence 8-2. Map of preliminary identified HCVF using the example of Bakanassky forest enterprise).</p>
9. Reduction in degraded and deforested area in targeted forestry territories bordering protected areas	11,305.60 ha Leskhoz: degraded ha, deforested ha Bakanas: (no data for degraded area, lack of monitoring capacity), 7,104 ha Narynkol: 70.6 ha, 67 ha Uygur: 986.4 ha, 3.2 ha Zaysan: 786 ha, 1646 ha Zharkent: 453.4 ha, 189 ha Zhongar: No data, lack of monitoring capacity.	>5% improvement over baseline	Reporting by targeted leskhozes (<i>Note: Baseline determined as per existing methodology and data (area of sanitary cutting and other technical activities), which is not comprehensively reflective of forest characteristics. An updated methodology for</i>	<p>Indicator is on track. Progress towards the EoP target remains at the mid-term level, i.e. there is no deviation or increase in the level of forest degradation from the baseline at the pilot sites.</p> <p>During the reporting period, the Project conducted a number of key activities, which both indirectly and directly influenced the reduction of degraded forests. A comparative analysis of changes in the degraded areas will be carried out at the final stage of the Project.</p> <p>In the reporting period, the following activities contributing to the reduction of degraded forest areas were implemented:</p> <p>(A) strengthening the fire protection measures at the pilot forest enterprises continued. Ridder, Pikhtovsky, and Zaisansky forest enterprises are habitats of especially valuable coniferous species (fir, larch, spruce, and cedar), occupying a total area of 475 thousand hectares. Of these, 65% of forests are located</p>

			<i>calculating forest degradation and deforestation will be determined at the inception phase and described in inception report.)</i>	<p>in inaccessible mountainous areas where land protection activities are difficult to perform. To this end, the Project procured 3 quad-runners with high cross-country performance in mountainous terrain.</p> <p>B) With support of the Project, 300,000 black saxaul seedlings were grown in Mezhdurechensk Forest Nursery in 2022 and planted on a total area of 200.0 ha in forest enterprises in Almaty and Zhambyl regions. Currently, more than 600,000 seedlings of Asian wild apple, saxaul and small-leaved elm are grown in this forest nursery.</p> <p>This is an integrated forest nursery focused on cultivation of various valuable tree species, including such rare species as turanga, Sogdian ash, almond, apricot tree, etc. It is planned to increase the annual cultivation volume up to 1.5 million seedlings per year.</p>
10. Change in area of degradation in pasture and forest pasture landscapes bordering protected areas	Total: 0 ha with reduced degradation out of 73,000 degraded ha of pastureland	Total: 73,000 ha with reduced degradation	GEF-6 PMAT (Land Degradation) Tracking Tool, sheet 2 ("Project Context") cell C17.	<p>81,680 ha of pastures with signs of reversed degradation. This indicator is fully achieved, 111% of the EoP target.</p> <p>The project plans to continue to implement project activities to improve pasture management in other pilot areas.</p> <p>81,680 ha of pastures, of which 16,945 ha near village and 64,736 ha of forest - distant pastures apply sustainable management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kaskasu (mountain pastures of the Western Tien-Shan): near-village pastures - 1463 ha, distant forest pastures: 12,000 ha; - Koksaray (pasture ecosystems of riparian forests of Syrdarya river): near-village pastures - 8,320 ha, forests pastures - 15,000 ha; - Belkaragai (pasture ecosystems of Altay forests: near village pastures - 3,300 ha, forests - 11,000 ha;

				<p>- Sumbe (pasture ecosystems of riparian forests of Charyn River): near-village pastures - 3,862 ha, forest pastures - 26,736 ha.</p> <p>To improve the conditions of pastures, pilot projects on introduction of sustainable system of pasture rotation and distant pasture management are implemented in 4 pilot areas "Koksaray", "Kaskasu", "Belkaragai" and "Sumbe".</p> <p>Demonstration projects were implemented in each of the above-mentioned pasture areas between May 2021 and June 2022.</p> <p>The pilots were implemented by Kazakh Research Institute of livestock and fodder production.</p> <p>At each site, measures to improve the condition of degraded pastures were implemented. The results of the pilot projects are shown below.</p> <p>Based on results of the assessment of pasture conditions, Pasture Management Plans were developed and approved for each pilot region.</p> <p>The Pasture Management Plans contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recommended seasonal schemes of pasture rotation considering the pasture types and their forage capacity. - carrying capacity norms of cattle grazing both for by-village and mountain pastures; - Action Plan to improve the pastures' conditions. <p>Pasture Management Plans were reviewed with participation of local population and pasture users. Pastures Public Councils composed of locals, farmers and regional akims were formed in each rural district. To reduce the pressure on near-village pastures the Public Councils issued a resolution to withdraw over the 7,000 head of livestock to distant summer pastures (zhailau):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Koksaray: the 1,500 head to Kisyk kudyk tract;
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kaskasu: the 2,000 head to Sairamsu forest pastures; - Belkaragai: the 2,000 head to summer pastures "Sary-Alka", "Altyn-Kazgan" and "Maiteksheshe"; - Sumbe: the 1,500 heads to mountain pastures. <p>Favorable living conditions for 10 herders were created at Belkaragai and Koksarai summer pastures through the provision of 4 sets of yurts (nomad houses) with solar panels. Clearing the mountain road at "Belkaragai" pasture opened an access to the summer pasture "Sary-Alka" with 1,131 residents of 4 villages (Topkain, Belkaragai, Ornek and Sogornoye).</p> <p>At Sumbe area conditions for watering of rural livestock were made for near-village pastures. For this purpose, 10 km of pipes were laid from the main well to the watering places. Also, for the distant pasture area, 1 mobile home was purchased for herders.</p> <p>20.0 ha of degraded lands at Kaskasu area were restored by sowing the perennial grasses (Hungarian sainfoin, barley).</p> <p>Efforts were made to increase the level of participation of rural residents in pasture management related issues. Explanatory workshops were held in each district and 144 people were informed, where 94 men and 50 women.</p> <p>In general, 15,834 rural residents of Belkaragai, Sumbe, Koksarai and Kaskasu rural districts, including 7,722 men and 8,112 women, indirectly benefitted from measures on sustainable pasture management.</p> <p>According to results of the visual monitoring, conducted by Kazakh Scientific Research Institute of Animal Husbandry and Forage Production at all pilot sites, there is a notable decrease of degradation of vegetation and soil by 3-7% from the baseline condition.</p>
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<p>11. Area outside PAs with enhanced conservation management (PA corridors and buffer zones identified in district integrated management plans)</p>	<p>N/A (no conservation measures planned in targeted districts)</p>	<p>350,000 ha</p>	<p>GIS analysis of integrated management plan maps, validated by terminal evaluation</p>	<p>This indicator has been fully achieved by bringing 648,160 ha (total area of potential ecologic corridors identified based on functional zoning) under enhanced conservation (185% of the EoP target). The indicator was achieved through the implementation of landscape planning activities in 7 districts of Almaty region: Kegen, Yeskeldy Rayimbek, Panfilov, Uygur, Enbshikazakh, Kerbulak. The activities have been implemented over 2 consecutive years from October 2020 to May 2022, in 3 stages: 1) analysis, assessment and mapping of current conditions of the pilot territories (ecosystems, natural resource potential, land use, biodiversity, agriculture, socio-economic situation); 2) identification of functional zones by designated use, biodiversity key spots, identification of conflict zones in land use, identification of corridors and buffer zones, elaboration of scenarios for sustainable development; 3) final stage: approval of Functional Zoning Schemes with stakeholders and key partners; As a result, Schemes of functional zoning, covering a total area of 5,732,439 ha were prepared. Functional zones of productive landscapes for agriculture, forestry, hunting, tourism, and recreation were defined. For each zone, the measures for sustainable land use have been elaborated. The experts have prepared more than 200 thematic database maps that contain information on climate, socio-economic conditions, demography, agriculture, biodiversity of the pilot areas. As a result of the integrated assessment, the potential ecological corridors to protect the habitats and</p>
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				<p>migration routes of key animal species (gazelle, snow leopard, Turkestan lynx, brown bear) were identified (pending approval by the regional administration), with a total area of 684,160 ha, of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecologic corridor 1 (Ile-Alatau-Sharyn-Altyn-Emel): 287,540 ha; - Ecologic corridor 2 (Altyn-Emel-Zhetysu Alatau): 130,280 ha; - Ecologic corridor 3 (Altyn-Emel): 63,880 ha; - Ecologic corridor 4 (Tereskey Alatau - Uzinkara (Ketmen): 166,460 ha. <p>Identified areas under ecocorridors will be used by the Akimat of Almaty region as a basis for planning and organizing scientific research and technical works</p> <p>A special attention was also paid to activities with local population since the agricultural livestock and farming have a significant impact on local landscapes.</p> <p>In the rural centers workshops with stakeholders were held to discuss and agree on the zoning schemes, explaining the principles and importance of functional zoning and landscape planning. These schemes were agreed with the district akimats.</p> <p>As of today, work is being completed to approve the Zoning Schemes at the level of district representative bodies (maslikhats) in accordance with the requirements of the Land Code.</p> <p>In April 2022 the Zoning schemes of 7 districts were presented at the regional level with participation of key local partners in Taldykorgan (regional center).</p> <p>685,025 people will benefit indirectly from implementation of landscape planning approaches, including 331,459 men and 326,566 women living in 7 pilot districts.</p>
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12. Number of good practice models for private afforestation established in Kazakhstan	N/A (no models yet established by project)	Two functional and replicable models demonstrated as feasible to meet key gaps in private afforestation regulatory framework: One private-sector based, and one community-based. Modified version of the target level according to MTE recommendations (2020): Model projects of private forest plantations are developed taking into account natural and climatic conditions and results/lessons learned from implemented pilots.	Project documentation, assessment by terminal evaluation	<p>Indicator is in progress and on track.</p> <p>As noted in the previous PIR-2021, per the MTR recommendation this target has been changed (reflected in the Minor Amendments section of the PIR), and the Project now focuses on the development of Model Business Projects to create private forest plantations at pilot areas.</p> <p>In 2022, the Government launched a Program to subsidize the private forest plantations not belonging to the forest public fund. In this regard, the Forestry and Wildlife Committee stressed the need to develop these Model Business Projects.</p> <p>Upon request of the FWC, development of Model Projects on creation of private forest plantations for the eastern regions of Kazakhstan is underway.</p> <p>In the 2nd half of 2022, Model Projects for the southern region will be initiated.</p> <p>By project end, Model Projects of various models of private forestry in the southern and eastern regions of the country for subsequent application at the national level will be developed and presented to the Committee on Forestry and Wildlife.</p>
13. Degree to which policy and regulatory context for managing natural resources incorporates ecosystem services	No methodology for considering full cost-benefit of ecosystem services incorporated in natural resource	At least one regulation adopted at provincial or national level that recognizes and	Project documentation, assessment by terminal evaluation	<p>Indicator is in progress and on track. During the reporting period, the indicator's target remains at the medium-term level.</p> <p>(A) As noted in the previous PIR, the Project has 1 pilot project to evaluate the national forestry system using the TSA methodology. The results of TSA assessment</p>

	management policy and regulatory framework	incorporates TSA methodology		<p>were widely presented to a number of stakeholders, ranging from the authorized body to the deputies of the Majilis of the Parliament.</p> <p>As a result of this work, recommendations were developed that included various scenarios for the sustainable development of forestry, based on the economic valuation of ecosystem services.</p> <p>Based on TSA recommendations, a member of the Majilis submitted his recommendation to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the transfer of 120 forestry enterprises from the jurisdiction of regional akimats to the jurisdiction of the authorized body in the forestry field, i.e. FWC</p> <p>(B) In this reporting period, the Project focused on testing various financial mechanisms aimed at forest conservation. Payments for forest ecosystem services was one of them.</p> <p>In January 2021, a new Environmental Code was adopted that includes an ecosystem approach, concept of ecosystem services, and billing mechanisms for ecosystem services.</p> <p>These regulations aimed to strengthen partnerships between the public and private sector and/or between private companies on ecosystem conservation.</p> <p>Currently, there are some PES practices in Kazakhstan, and they are developed mainly for sustainable water management.</p> <p>There are no examples yet in the forest sector. However, PES schemes of interrelation between the forest management and development of energy sector, agriculture, tourism are very relevant for Kazakhstan in the context of the country's policy on sustainable green growth.</p>
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				<p>In this regard, the Project is working on development of practical recommendations to apply the PES mechanism in the forest sector.</p> <p>In March-April 2022 the identification of ecosystem services was carried out with participation of Karadala and Ridder forestry enterprises. The potential PES schemes were identified for use by the forestry enterprises.</p>
14. Quality and coverage (≥ 50% of habitat) of snow leopard monitoring data in Kazakhstan as indicated by estimated accuracy and timeliness of national snow leopard population estimate	Latest population estimate 15 years prior (2001) with a 91% confidence level (lowest possible estimated population / highest possible estimated population, i.e. 100/110 = 91%)	Publishing of annual population estimates with a 95% or greater confidence level	Annual national snow leopard monitoring database	<p>The target has been achieved. Project is supporting the collection of reliable data on snow leopard population estimates based on monitoring surveys.</p> <p>The number of snow leopard species for 2022 was updated. The field and desk studies of scientific expeditions showed an increase in the number of snow leopards compared to previous years to a level of 140-180 species.</p> <p>Reliability of the data (with a 95% confidence level) on the number of snow leopard is confirmed by 294 camera traps on the key habitats (Altai, Zhetysy Alatau, Northern and Western Tien-Shan).</p> <p>To improve the efficiency of protection of rare and key animal species, SMART-patrolling was introduced in 7 pilot environmental institutions (National Parks: Zhongar-Alatau, Tarbagatai, Kolsai-Kolderi, Nature Reserves: Markakol, Aksu-Zhabagly and Karatau, Merken Forestry).</p> <p>The inspector's roundtrip maps were uploaded on 144 smartphones to quickly enter the data of monitored animals species with simultaneous photographing.</p> <p>The Forestry and Wildlife Committee was assisted in preparation of the Annual National Snow Leopard Population Assessment Report.</p> <p>For 2021, the number of snow leopard is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Western Tien-Shan: 17-23 individuals;

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Northern Tien-Shan: 60-74 individuals; - Zhetysu Alatau: 60-77 individuals; - Altay: 3-6 individuals. <p>To determine the habitat and migration routes of snow leopards, 3 satellite collars were attached to leopards for the first time in Kazakhstan (out of 7 procured).</p>
15. Level of international cooperation and coordination with Kazakhstan border countries regarding illegal wildlife trade, biodiversity management in borderland protected areas, and snow leopard monitoring	No formal international agreement between Kazakhstan and neighboring countries related to snow leopard conservation	International agreement between Kazakhstan and at least one bordering country under implementation regarding at least one of the below issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperation on law enforcement at border points regarding illegal wildlife trade - Illegal hunting by border guards - Data sharing on snow leopard monitoring 	Existence/absence of agreement	<p>Indicator is in progress and on track.</p> <p>(A) Due to the structural changes within the Government at the level of executive power - ministries and departments of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic, the draft Intergovernmental Memorandum on snow leopard conservation among the Central Asian countries was re-submitted for approval.</p> <p>Currently, the draft of this Memorandum is under approval by relevant governmental agencies of Kazakhstan.</p> <p>(B) At the level of UNDP Projects, the Central Asian countries have been exchanging information on a number of snow leopard species along the bordering protected areas. The Handbook on rare and migratory species is under preparation for training and enforcement at the level of customs and border services of the Central Asian countries.</p> <p>The project plans to attend an international conference on the conservation of the snow leopard organized by GSLP in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) in the fall of 2022. Representatives of key ministries of the Central Asian countries are expected to attend this meeting. During this upcoming event the project jointly with the Committee on Forestry and Wildlife plans to raise the issue of signing the Intergovernmental Agreement on the snow leopard.</p>

<p>16. Consistency of project gender mainstreaming approach with project plans</p>	<p>N/A – Project not under implementation; project design includes multiple elements designed to mainstream gender</p>	<p>Gender mainstreaming carried out during project implementation, as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Project Board and local stakeholder working groups have gender balance and/or include a gender expert; b. Policies, laws, and regulations developed with project support include gender perspectives, as relevant c. Project events and activities (e.g. trainings) promote gender balance among invited participants, as feasible d. Project education and awareness activities are 	<p>Monitoring via annual project reporting (PIR) by project team</p>	<p>Indicator is in progress and on track.</p> <p>The Project has been actively promoting gender issues in the Project areas. Special attention is given to supporting women's initiatives and increasing the level of capacity of rural women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implemented project activities in 2021-2022 on pasture improvement in 4 pilot districts have gained increased participation of rural women in addressing the effective pasture management through created Community Pasture Councils. More than 8,000 women living in 4 pilot districts (Koksaray, Kaskasu, Sumbe and Belkaragay) benefitted indirectly from the measures on improvement of the pastures, and 50 women improved their skills on sustainable pasture management practices. b. The Phase II of the five-year Eco-Damu Loan Program launched in 2020 is still underway, providing funding for rural entrepreneurs to start and develop their business projects around the PAs. Among the main priorities of this Program are promotion of gender equality and economic empowerment of women to increase the sustainability of local communities. In 2021, 13 rural female entrepreneurs received financial support to implement their business projects (33% of the total number of funded projects) for a total KZT 84,000,000 (USD 197,300). As a result, the rural women living near the protected areas were able to open 4 guesthouses, 3 sewing workshops, 2 poultry farms, 2 beekeeping projects, 1 fruit orchard and a pasture rehabilitation project. This provided a sustainable income for women and their families and created new jobs.
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		developed and carried out incorporating gender perspectives, as relevant		<p>In total, 39 business projects for a total KZT 227,000,000 (USD 483,400) were financed under the Eco-Damu Loan Program.</p> <p>The results of medium-term ecotourism planning in Katon-Karagai National Park showed the need to improve the catering services for tourists in Katon-Karagai district (VKO, Altay project area) in 2019-2020. Most of the food service workers, especially in rural areas, are women who, for several reasons, have limited access to new knowledge and opportunities.</p> <p>In November 2021 with the project support 9 rural female entrepreneurs in Katon-Karagai village improved their knowledge and practical skills in catering, servicing, and business communication. The gained experience and knowledge are successfully applied in their businesses during the tourist season of 2022.</p> <p>In 2021, 32 women from PAs and forestry enterprises improved their skills in PA planning and forestry management.</p>
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